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HOUDON IN AMERICA

A COLLECTION OF DOCUMENTS IN THE JEFFERSON PAPERS IN THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

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WITH
AN INTRODUCTION
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INTRODUCTION

JEAN-ANTOINE HOUDON[1]

1828-1928

An American tribute is paid to the memory of Jean-Antoine Houdon by the Pennsylvania Museum in its inaugural exhibition. A rotunda especially designed for sculpture is dedicated to the works of this Frenchman, who handed down to posterity the features of almost every important compatriot of his day and whose centenary we celebrate this year. He is the artist, who better than any other, recorded the stormy moods of France during the half century which followed the death of Louis XV. Not only did he impress himself upon his contemporaries in France, but his fame spread throughout Europe and across the seas. And it was to commemorate his influence in America in those early years that the Museum formed this exhibition, the most important gathering of his works which has ever been shown in this country. Surrounding a bronze proof of the statue of General Washington from the Richmond state capitol, busts of Benjamin Franklin, Robert Fulton, the Marquis de La Fayette, Thomas Jefferson and John Paul Jones are exhibited on classic pedestals together with Turgot and Condorcet, French philosophers and friends of Franklin, closely identified with the early relations between America and France. The Museum is particularly indebted to the American Philosophical Society and to the National Academy of Design for their coöperation in forming this exhibition. An equally important debt is owed to the Commonwealth of Virginia, who permitted the Museum, through a special act of Assembly, to show the La Fayette bust which was commissioned for Virginia. Simultaneous with the observance in Philadelphia, two memorial exhibitions were held by the French Government, one at Versailles in the Municipal Library and the other in Paris in the Galeries Buvelot, in June, under the high patronage of the President of France and the Queen of Spain. The proceeds of this exhibition were devoted to the French and Spanish Leagues for the Control of Cancer and it was one of the most brilliant features of the Paris season.

[1] Reprinted by special permission from "The Pennsylvania Museum Bulletin." Vol. XXIV, No. 122. October-November, 1928.

Houdon's works were gathered together from all over Europe, from both private as well as public collections.

The importance of Houdon as a sculptor is determined by his importance as a man. Born in Versailles, of obscure parentage, he spent his childhood in the midst of the reckless splendor of the court. The contrast of his own position with the wanton luxury which he saw about him must have whetted, in these early years, an irony which characterized his later portraits under the Republic and the Empire. As a baby he was precipitated into an artistic milieu, for his father was porter in a royal art school, and Jean-Antoine's earliest toys were sculptor sticks and modelling clay. At nine he had already embarked upon his career and was awarded the prize by the Royal Academy in his sixteenth year. From then on, his genius won immediate recognition. Lemoyne, Pigalle and René Michel Slodz interested themselves in his behalf. He was soon admitted to the Royal Art School, from which he later went for three years to the French Academy in Rome. Unlike the greater number of his contemporaries, he absorbed the classic teaching of Rome without losing the brilliant positive qualities which make his work so crisp and French. His return to France was heralded with success and he immediately embarked upon the series of busts which have gained him a place among the immortals—King Gustave III of Sweden, "the Great Catherine," the royal family, noble lords and ministers, statesmen and philosophers, scholars and literary men, interpreters of the fine arts and of the theatre. Soldiers, too, sat for him, as did Napoleon, first as Consul and later as Emperor, with the Empress and all the dignitaries of the court. In the myriad of portraits which he produced there is an unfailing clearness of vision which shows the man to have been a keen psychologist. It would have been easy to fall to the level of photography, but he was controlled by the same precision of execution and nervous elegance which is found to a greater or lesser degree in every French work of art.

The latter half of the eighteenth century was an age in which superficiality was at a premium. Manners and style were the criteria of the moment and the hypercritical point of view which exists in French literature to this day had encouraged in most of his contemporaries a cynicism which did not penetrate very far below the surface. Houdon will probably not be counted a great imaginative artist, although his Diana and St. Bruno in Rome have elicited considerable praise, but his strength is that of a chronicler and there is perhaps more than a chance relationship between his devastating impressions of his sitters and

certain passages of Voltaire's "Dictionnaire Philosophique." Camille Mauclair in "La Revue Rhénane" for May 1928, says, "We are certain that what we see with our eyes in Houdon's characterization of a man was his true character. These busts certify the tastes and aspirations of the sitters, their passions and their weaknesses: all that their writings may have taught us, and that their deeds or biographies may have affirmed, and, when some shade of expression in a portrait disconcerts us, sooner or later the discovery of an unpublished document will verify the truth of this *nuance* which the sculptor did not fail to catch. Every sitting for a portrait became a duel, in which the model defended himself with no little hypocrisy. Against a man so penetrating as Houdon, defense was futile, for one had best surrender completely to this dialectician and confessor. For more than sixty years there passed through the studio of this solitary man a procession of human beings, who, because of their social functions, disguised their feelings and their thoughts from their families, as well as from the crowd, and who nourished great ambitions in themselves. But he, a son of the soil, a calm little *bourgeois,* held them under a brutal examination and possessed them through the sovereignty of his art."

One recognizes immediately in this exhibition in Philadelphia, how skilfully Houdon broke through the superficiality of his time. Between galleries of English portraits and of American portraits painted in the English manner, these faces show an individuality of expression which was not then common. And in approaching these American portraits one must refer to Houdon's studies of his contemporaries, the literary giants of France: Voltaire, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Diderot, Mirabeau, La Fontaine and Buffon, writers and philosophers, in whose footsteps Franklin, often referred to as the first civilized American, was strutting with no little grace. Republicanism was in the air; Revolution and discontent were the salts with which every thought was flavored. Franklin realized the vast differences in temperament between the European and the quiet gentlemen whom he represented, and to him must be given the credit of choosing the one artist who could appreciate the simplicity of our Republican statesmen. Compare Turgot, for example, and La Fayette with Washington, Jefferson and John Paul Jones; how unjustly the latter would have been portrayed by Coysevox or any other court sculptor at Versailles.

Charles Henry Hart and his collaborator, Edward Biddle of Philadelphia, in their "Memoirs of the Life and Works of Jean-Antoine Houdon" have studied exhaustively Houdon's visit to America. He

sailed with two of his workmen and Franklin on the 22nd of July, 1785, after a settlement had been made for the execution of the statue of General Washington and its pedestal for twenty-five thousand livres, and an additional life insurance of ten thousand livres and his expenses. Jefferson, who was quite as actively interested in bringing Houdon to this country as was Franklin, wrote Washington on July 10, 1785.

" Mr Houdon would much sooner have had the honour of attending you but for a spell of sickness which long gave us to despair of his recovery & from which he is but recently recovered. he comes now for the purpose of lending the aid of his art to transmit you to posterity. he is without rivalship in it, being employed from all parts of Europe in whatever is capital. he has had a difficulty to withdraw himself from an order of the Empress of Russia, a difficulty however which arose from a desire to shew her respect, but which never gave him a moment's hesitation about his present voyage which he considers as promising the brightest chapter of his history. I have spoke of him as an Artist only; but I can assure you also that, as a man, he is disinterested, generous, candid, & panting after glory: in every circumstance meriting your good opinion. he will have need to see you much while he shall have the honour of being with you, which you can the more freely admit as his eminence and merit gives him admission into genteel societies here. he will need an interpreter. I suppose you could procure some person from Alexandria who might be agreeable to yourself to perform this office. he brings with him a subordinate workman or two, who of course will associate with their own class only . . . ."[1]

On September 20th, Franklin notified Washington of their arrival, to which Washington replied to Franklin: " When it suits Mr. Houdon to come hither I will accommodate him in the best manner I am able and shall endeavor to render his stay as agreeable as I can." The same day, according to these memoirs, Washington wrote to Houdon:

" By a letter which I have lately had the honor to receive from Dr. Franklin, at Philadelphia, I am informed of your arrival at that place. Many letters from very respectable characters in France, as well as the Doctor's, inform me of the occasion, for which, though the cause is not of my seeking, I feel the most agreeable and grateful sensations. I wish the object of your mission had been more worthy of the masterly genius of the first statuary in Europe; for thus you are represented to me. It will give me pleasure, Sir, to welcome you to the seat of my retirement; and whatever I have, or can procure, that is necessary to your purposes, or convenient and agreeable to your wishes, you must freely command, as inclination to oblige you will be among the last things in which I shall be found deficient, either on your arrival or during your stay."

[1] Jefferson MSS. Library of Congress.

The sculptor arrived at Mount Vernon on the night of Sunday, October 2, 1785, and it is interesting to note the following passages from Washington's diary:

"After we were in bed (about eleven o'clock in the evening), Mr. Houdon sent from Paris by Dr. Franklin and Mr. Jefferson to take my Bust, in behalf of the State of Virginia, with three young men assistants, introduced by a Mr. Perin, a French gentleman of Alexandria, arrived here by water from the latter place."

The following entry on October 7th:

"Sat this day, as I had done yesterday, for Mr. Houdon to form my bust."

October 10th:

"Observed the process for preparing the plaister of Paris and mixing of it according to Mr. Houdon."

October 12th:

"In the evening Mr. Madison came."

October 14th:

"Mr. Madison went away."

October 19th:

"Mr. Houdon, having finished his business which bro't him hither, went up on Monday (17th), with his people, work and implements, in my barge, to Alexandria, to take passage in the Stage for Philadelphia next morning."

Houdon returned immediately to France to complete the statue from the bust which he had formed, guided by the life mask which he later showed to Rembrandt Peale in Paris. The Pennsylvania Museum is very fortunate to possess, through the generosity of the late John D. McIlhenny, one of the three proofs of this statue which the Commonwealth of Virginia consented to have made. The original was exhibited in the Salon the year following Houdon's return, beside the bust of La Fayette, ordered for Virginia in 1781, and which is now a prominent feature in the Museum's exhibition. This portrait of La Fayette recalls the manner of the sculptors of the French court of an earlier generation. It is an heroic representation of an aristocrat stressing the qualities of his position and the importance of his rank. As a contrast to this, the plaster heads of Jefferson, Fulton and John Paul Jones accent the individuality in the faces of each of these men. Jefferson wears an air of solemnity and wisdom which the histories of the man have shown were native to him. Unfortunately, this portrait, lent by the American Philosophical Society, was at one time badly

damaged, and in an effort to hide the repairs which were made to the back of the head, the whole bust was coated with oil and lampblack. Only recently has this coating been removed, but the process has left a pallor and shadows in the subject's face which the artist never intended to show. The well-known heads of John Paul Jones and Robert Fulton come from the National Academy of Design. John Paul Jones' bravado was not missed by Houdon, who portrayed him as a handsome swashbuckler and philanderer. Fulton, on the other hand, is the quiet citizen and inventor with high intellectual forehead and searching, practical eyes.

A portrait in the possession of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, which Rembrandt Peale painted of Houdon, may throw some further light on the character of the man. A broad, intelligent face, slightly skeptical, which perhaps justifies in some degree the accusations of vanity and charlatanism which were used against him by his contemporaries in Paris, more particularly by certain official sculptors whose popularity did not reach the heights of their rival's. Lady Dilke [1] claims that this " charge of charlatanism fits ill with the reputation for simplicity and frankness which Houdon enjoyed, but he seems to have been one of those who liked, even when at work, to feel the stir and movement of others." It is true that Houdon in his studio in the Bibliothèque du Roi allowed the public at large to inspect the works which he had on hand and even went to the point of advertising in the Paris newspapers, but however unethical it may have seemed to the artistic world of Paris he seems never to have been carried away with the praises showered upon him nor by the great demand for his portraits and the favorable criticism of his work. That he knew on which side his bread was buttered is all the more to the artist's credit, for having lost a considerable sum of money on a commission which he executed for the Empress of Russia, he took great care to have the official arrangements of his American excursion settled before his departure. He did not, although he was in constant companionship with statesmen and politicians who sat to him, enter into public affairs. He cared little for politics and it is interesting to note that during the Revolution he took no active part on either side, although the Reign of Terror came very near being fatal to him. It was his wife's cleverness in converting a statue of Saint Scholastica into an allegori-

[1] " French Architects and Sculptors of the XVIII Century."

cal figure of "Philosophy" which saved Houdon from the guillotine; for his standing as a former academician had made him an enemy of the people.

During the Revolution and Directoire, Houdon lived from hand to mouth, but under the Empire he was awarded several official commissions, among them a statue of Cicero and busts of the Emperor and Empress Josephine. In 1814 he ceased to exhibit his work and it is supposed devoted his entire time to teaching at the École des Beaux-Arts. He was a chevalier of the Legion of Honor, retired at the age of eighty-two, and died in the palace of the Institut de France on the fifteenth day of July, 1828.

Francis Henry Taylor.

HOUDON IN AMERICA

It was the good fortune of both France and America that the effigies of some of the men who contributed most to the success of the Revolution were chiselled out of solid marble or cast in bronze by one of the greatest artists of the eighteenth century. Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, John Paul Jones and, above all, George Washington, still live in the masterpieces of the French sculptor whose fidelity to nature and keenness of perception have to this day remained unrivalled. More stirring than a poem, more convincing than any erudite treatise, more impressive than any emotional oration, more enduring than any treaty of alliance, these works stand as the most lasting and tangible monument to the friendship of the two nations.

Thus it was fitting that the exhibition held in Paris less than two years ago to commemorate the centenary of the death of Houdon should be paralleled by a similar exhibition organized in the first capital of the United States under the auspices of the Pennsylvania Museum of Fine Arts.

Much has already been written on Houdon, and America has not been unmindful of her debt to the French artist. Many are the tributes that were paid to him during the last century and a half, the most authoritative being the magnificent book of Charles Henry Hart and Edward Biddle: *Memoirs of the Life and Works of Jean Antoine Houdon The Sculptor of Voltaire and Washington. Philadelphia. Printed for the authors. M C M X I.*

Since that time however, several new documents have been discovered which complete and round up the story of Houdon's contribution to America. These documents were gathered mainly from the Jefferson papers in the Library of Congress, while some others already published are given here in the hope that they will help to understand better the French artist whose name is forever associated with the fame of the illustrious Americans he portrayed.

No effort has been made to enumerate the many replicas of Houdon's works which exist in different collections or to discriminate between them. He created a certain type fixing for posterity the traits of his models, and the popularity of his characterisations inevitably

resulted, even in his day, in the production of many replicas and imitations. From the mass of contradictory claims and information the history of his individual works is sometimes difficult to disentangle, and for this particular aspect of the question we beg leave to refer to the book written by his American biographers and to the competent and elaborate study of M. Giacometti.[1]

The documents presented here deal mainly with Houdon's voyage to America, his statue of Washington, the project of an equestrian statue of the General, and the bust of Lafayette made by order of the Commonwealth of Virginia; in the last part of this "cahier" however will be found documents of a different nature, dealing almost entirely with Houdon's distress after the Revolution and the belated settlement of his claim on Virginia for the statue of Washington.

On the 22d day of June, 1784, the Virginia Assembly passed the following resolution:

Resolved, that the Executive be requested to take measures for procuring a statue of General Washington to be of the finest marble, and best workmanship, with the following inscription on its pedestal:

The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia have caused this statue to be erected as a Monument of Affection and Gratitude to George Washington, who, uniting to the Endowments of the Hero the Virtues of the Patriot, and exerting both in establishing the Liberties of his Country, has rendered his Name dear to his Fellow Citizens, and given the World an immortal Example of true Glory.[2]

On July first, Governor Harrison wrote to Charles Wilson Peale, requesting him "to draw a full length picture of him [the General] immediately, and, as soon as it is sufficiently dry, to have it packed up in the most secure manner and shipped in the first ship bound for France to the address of the honble. Thomas Jefferson." [3]

The news was published in the *Virginia Gazette* and brought some disturbance to the mind of the artistic consul of France, Saint-John de Crèvecoeur, who was then in Boston. He thought it his patriotic duty to write at once to Jefferson, to express his anxiety and to communicate to the American minister in Paris his doubts on the feasibility of such an undertaking without bringing an artist to America for the special purpose of working from life on the statue of the General. At the same time he gave the most interesting and technical information on

[1] *Le statuaire Jean-Antoine Houdon et son époque.* 3 vols., Paris, 1918-1919.

[2] *The Writings of George Washington,* edited by Worthington C. Ford. Vol. X, 395.

[3] *Governors' MS. Letter-book,* State Library, Richmond. In Hart and Biddle, p. 184.

the process of obtaining a life-mask, and recommended that such method be followed in order to transmit to posterity a true image of the greatest American (*Library of Congress MSS. Boston. September 1st, 1784*).

On December 10, 1784, Jefferson informed Washington of the mission he had been entrusted with by his native State, and of the choice he had already made of the artist. Benjamin Franklin had agreed with him that Houdon was generally recognized as "the first statuary in the world," and the French artist had offered to leave all his business in order to go to America and "to form a bust" of the General "from life."

A month later Jefferson wrote to Governor Harrison to justify the choice that he and Franklin had made and to indicate Houdon's plans to leave "by the April packet."

In the meantime the full-length portrait made by Peale had been sent but not received, and although it was not to be of any real use to the sculptor, Jefferson felt some anxiety about the picture. He consequently wrote to M. Clouet, Commissaire de la Marine à l'Orient, to inquire into the matter. It is one of the very few documents written in French by Jefferson. It is reproduced here with the original spelling and corrections proving that the Minister of the United States did not yet feel quite at home in the French language (*Library of Congress MSS. and Clouet's answer dated January 28, 1785*).

Crèvecoeur had been acquainted with the decision of Houdon at an earlier date in a letter which seems to have disappeared. His answer which is given here expressed his satisfaction and contained information of much interest on the projects of the author of the *Letters of an American Farmer* (*Library of Congress MSS. New York. May 18, 1785*).

Houdon's illness having prevented him from sailing in April, it was decided that he would leave with Dr. Franklin who was planning to return home in the fall. At this juncture, it was decided to insure the artist's life for twenty thousand livres, in case he should die "between his departure from Paris and his return to it."

The American biographers of Houdon seem to believe that this precaution was taken solely at the request of the artist. As a matter of fact Houdon had only asked that ten thousand livres be paid to his family in case he should die during his voyage. The ten thousand additional represented moneys paid in advance to Houdon for his passage and his equipment, for Jefferson intended fully to protect the

State of Virginia in case of any accident. This appears clearly in the several letters that passed between Jefferson and John Adams on the matter (*Paris, July 7, 1785—Paris, August 10, 1785—Paris, September 24, 1785—Paris, November 19, 1785*). Jefferson's uneasiness about the delay in obtaining the insurance seems to have been largely due, as he expressed it, to the fact that "in case of his death . . . . we may lose twenty thousand pounds."

On July 10, 1785, Jefferson wrote to Washington formally introducing Houdon. Amusingly enough he seems to have entertained some doubts about the reception the French artist would be given at Mount Vernon, and he took great care to inform the General that Houdon was quite an acceptable character: "he will have need to see you much while he shall have the honour of being with you, which you can the more freely admit as his eminence and merit gives him admission into genteel societies here" (*MS. July 10, 1785*).

Houdon was to leave Paris the next day to join Franklin at Le Havre and Jefferson entrusted him with several other letters. One of them was a long communication to the Governor of Virginia, indicating the exact terms of the contract made with the artist. Twenty-five thousand livres or one thousand English guineas were to be paid for the statue and pedestal; the traveling expenses would amount to four or five thousand livres, and ten thousand livres were to be paid to Houdon's family in case he should die before returning to France. Altogether Jefferson thought he had made a good bargain and he was "satisfied that he [Houdon] will be a considerable loser"; but he knew that Virginia did not expect originally to spend more than 1000 guineas, and he did not feel that he had authority to offer better terms to the artist (*MS. Paris, July 11, 1785*).

At this date we find a document of the utmost interest. Congress had proposed as early as 1783 "that an equestrian statue be erected to General Washington," although no action had been taken for providing the necessary means. Jefferson however had been informed of the project and he had not failed to call Houdon's attention to the prospect of obtaining the order, for this greater undertaking would "make it worth the business he would lose by absenting himself."

He consequently wrote to the Virginia delegation in Congress to urge them to press the matter and to recommend Houdon "as the first statuary of his age, without rivalship." It was his honest opinion that "it would be better for Congress to put this business into his hands than those of any other person living" (*MS. July 12, 1785*).

This letter, only published in part by Hart and Biddle, is here given in full. The passages in which Jefferson gives his expert opinion on the desirable size for a statue of this kind are particularly worthy of attention.

We have placed here several undated documents referring to the same subject, although at least one of them seems to have been written a year later.

A.—Tableau de ce qu'on couté plusieurs statues en bronze et le nom des artistes qui les ont exécutées.

This document contains information of much value on the cost of some of the most famous works of art of the eighteenth century.

B.—Translation of the "Tableau."

C.—A note in French stating the different processes for casting a statue in bronze, and Houdon's qualifications to undertake the work, marked in pencil June 29, 1786.

D.—Translation of the same note.

E.—A note in French containing a proposal made by Houdon to cast a bronze statue of Washington, in case Congress should prefer to have a pedestrian statue of the General. The price to be 60,000 livres.

On July 20, 1785, Houdon had joined Franklin at Le Havre; they crossed together to England and sailed from Southampton on July 28th.

They were still on the ocean when Jefferson received a letter from the Governor of Virginia, dated June 16th, acquainting him officially with a resolution of the Virginia Assembly relative to the busts of M. de la Fayette. It may be recalled here that as early as December 1781 the House of Delegates, wishing to express the gratitude of Virginia for the part played by Lafayette at Yorktown, had passed the following resolution:

Resolved unanimously, that a Bust of the Marquis de la Fayette be directed to be made in Paris, of the best marble employed for such purpose, and presented to the Marquis with the following inscription on it;—

This bust was voted on the 17th day of December 1781, by the General Assembly of the State of Virginia, to the Honorable the Marquis de la Fayette (Major General in the service of the United States of America and late Commander in Chief of the army of the United States in Virginia), as a lasting monument of his merit and of their gratitude.

Resolved, that the Commercial Agent be directed to employ a proper person in Paris to make the above Bust."

It was not until December 1784, however, that the House of Delegates provided the means to put the project into effect, and reenacted

the former resolution under a somewhat different form. Two busts of the Marquis were to be made, one to be presented to the city of Paris, the other to be "fixed in such public place, at the seat of government, as may hereafter be appointed for the erection of the statue voted by the General Assembly to General Washington."

This last part of the resolution is particularly to be remembered as it shows that even for their contemporaries the name of Lafayette was already inseparable from that of Washington.

As a matter of fact Jefferson and Barclay had taken action without waiting for formal notification by the Governor, and before Houdon's departure for America they had requested him "to take the model of this bust in plaister" (*MS. August 22, 1785*).

On September 20th, Franklin advised Washington of his safe arrival; but the main purpose of his letter was to inform him that Houdon would be pleased to wait on the General as soon as he could supply himself with the tools and materials which unfortunately had been lost in transit and left somewhere between Paris and Le Havre, with all the rest of Houdon's baggage. Houdon's plight is best described in a letter written presumably to W. T. Franklin, an extract of which was forwarded to Jefferson (*MS. September 14, 1785*). The French artist and his two assistants had found themselves with their "*sacs de nuit,*" at the time of sailing and they had to buy linen and clothes "*de pied en tête*" in Philadelphia.

For the rest of the story the *Diaries* of Washington provide the most important material. Houdon arrived at Mount Vernon on Sunday, October 2nd, at eleven o'clock at night, when the General was already in bed.

No other mention of Houdon appears in the *Diaries* until the next Friday, October 7th, when Washington sat for his bust, as he had done the day before.

On Sunday the 9th, Houdon accompanied Washington to the funeral of Mrs. Manly. On Monday 10th, Washington described at great length "the process for preparing the plaister of Paris and mixing it." This entry is most important for two reasons. It seems almost certain that the life mask of the General was taken on that day, since Washington gave a complete description of the preparation of the "plaister," and added that it had to be used at once "as it begins to turn hard in four or five minutes." The mention of the brush indicates beyond any doubt that of the two methods described at great length by Saint-John Crèvecoeur in his letter of September 1, 1784, Houdon had chosen the second

one "still more desagreeable," and that application of the plaster had been made with a brush.

Having finished his work, Houdon left on Wednesday 19th, and arrived in Philadelphia the next day as appears from a letter of Franklin to Ferdinand Grand (*Philadelphia, October 20, 1786*). The bust made at Mount Vernon was exhibited to Congress, to Franklin and others and described by Charles Thomson (*Hart and Biddle, p. 205*).

Houdon was back in Paris at the beginning of 1786, and on January 4th, Jefferson wrote to Washington to ask the General whether "there is any particular dress or any particular attitude which you would rather wish to be adopted." He added that Houdon had brought with him "a mould of the face only," leaving "the other part of his work with his workmen to come by some other conveiance."

In a letter written on January 24th to the Governor of Virginia, Jefferson informed Harrison of the safe return of Houdon "with the necessary mould and measures for General Washington's statue." But a large part of his letter was given to money matters. Houdon was much in need of funds and had spent all the money paid in advance to equip himself and his assistants. As in so many other cases Lafayette had stepped into the breach and stood as security for the repayment of this money.

Jefferson also mentioned the fact that one of the two busts of Lafayette would soon be ready. He expected to present it to the city of Paris at once and hoped to be able to send the other one to Virginia in the course of the summer. The last part of the letter contained a description of the curious process invented by a French artisan for the manufacturing of standard and interchangeable parts for the army muskets. It would appear from this that the first attempt to standardize certain products of manufacture was made long ago by a Frenchman whose name is not even recorded (*MS. January 24, 1786*).

With Madison, Jefferson discussed at great length the inscription proposed for General Washington's statue. Houdon's objections to the length of the original inscription were reported. The French artist would have favored a short inscription in front, and three bas-reliefs with appropriate inscriptions representing the evacuation of Boston, the capture of the Hessians, and the surrender of York, "the three most brilliant actions of his military life." One may recall here that the statue was finally shipped to America without any inscription and that the present one was not carved until 1814. Houdon made a similar

objection to the inscription proposed for the bust of Lafayette, but he was evidently overruled. Finally Jefferson suggested that the bust of Rochambeau be placed with those of Gates, Greene and Franklin in the new Capitol (*MS. February 6, 1786*).

Madison answered on May 12th, approving the idea which however never came to fruition (*MS. May 12, 1786*).

On May 7, 1786, Jefferson had written to W. T. Franklin to inform him of three important events: the marriage of the Ambassador of Sweden with Miss Necker—that Houdon was taking a wife also—finally that the bust of the General had arrived and met the approbation of those who knew the original.

Possibly this bust was the terra cotta sold after the death of Houdon in 1828, bought by Mr. Walferdin, and by him bequeathed to the Louvre, where it still can be seen.

In the meantime, Jefferson busied himself with the presentation of the bust of Lafayette to the city of Paris. It appears that such an honor could not be granted to a subject of the French king without special permission of His Gracious Majesty. The American Minister consequently wrote to M. de Rayneval to inquire into the matter, and the permission having been granted the formal presentation took place on September 27, 1786. Jefferson confined to his room "by the consequences of a fall" delegated William Short, his secretary and a citizen of the State of Virginia, to represent the Commonwealth. The second bust was not forwarded to Virginia until the late fall of the year 1788. The bust in the Hôtel de Ville was destroyed during the French Revolution, and the bust in Richmond had to be restored after the nose was broken off. Curiously enough another bust of Lafayette, now in Versailles, suffered the same injury.

On August 1, 1786, Washington put himself on record with regard to the "particular dress" to be adopted for his statue. The General had no desire to dictate in the matter; he did not however favor a strict adherence to the garb of antiquity but suggested some little deviation in favor of the modern costume. This passage is most interesting as it clearly shows that either the artist or the promoters of the plan had thought at first of portraying the American general clad in the flowing folds of a sort of toga and this receives confirmation from the terra cotta in the Louvre.

Our next document in the Jefferson papers is a curious letter sent to John Paul Jones, who was so pleased with the bust Houdon had made

of him that he had ordered eight copies to be distributed among his friends (*Paris, March 23, 1789*).

Shortly before his departure from France, Jefferson seems to have experienced some difficulty in dealing with Houdon. The artist was hard pressed for money and had been somewhat disappointed in his expectations, since the equestrian statue had been practically abandoned. He had applied to Jefferson for a sum of 8000 livres to be paid on account for the pedestrian statue of the General, and Jefferson, while sending him a draft for the amount, thought it his duty to call the artist's attention to the fact that " the block of marble had not yet been attacked." Further delay might implicate Jefferson very unpleasantly, and he begged Houdon to make all possible haste. Accompanying this letter written in French was Jefferson's personal draft for 1000 livres " pour les objets que M. Houdon a eu la bonté de faire pour Monsieur Jefferson, avec mille assurances de son attachement" (*MS. July 3, 1789*). The objects referred to in this letter are probably those mentioned in the next undated document which enumerates " Houdon's Diana in plaister, his Frileuse and his écorché in plaister."

We also place here three documents referring to the payment of different sums to Houdon by Jefferson and his successor for the Commonwealth of Virginia:

A.—" Notte des Mandats de son Excellence Monsieur de Jefferson Portez au Compte de l'Etat de Virginie." The last entry being dated March 4, 1786.

B.—A bill of Houdon for " une colonne pour mettre le Buste de M. Le Marquis de la Fayette," dated in pencil September 1786.

C.—" Titres à l'appui du Compte de l'Etat de Virginie," including the different sums paid Houdon up to December 14, 1792. This last item was for 9000 livres, paid for the statue of General Wasinghton (*sic*). The total was certified by Grand & C° on May 25, 1793.

From these figures it would appear that Houdon was paid in full even before the statue was delivered, since the masterpiece of the artist was shipped to America toward the close of January 1796. It seems however that Houdon signed the receipt for the last payment under protest. In a letter sent to the Governor of Virginia in September 1796, he declared in his queer English that the last sum had been paid in " assignats who losting in that time 60/100 give only the value of 5625 silver." He consequently estimated that the sum still due amounted to 3375 livres.

Houdon it seems had also protested when the statue was shipped to America; no answer having been received, he took the initiative to write directly to the Governor of Virginia, who evidently forwarded the document to Jefferson since it was found in his papers (*MS. Paris, September 8, 1796*). Houdon appended a statement of Grand according to which Gouverneur Morris, while admitting that Houdon's "reclamation" was well taken, declared that he had no right to dispose of "les fonds du Congrès sans son consentement."

That no action was taken at the time is not particularly astonishing in view of the difficulties which arose between France and America in the ensuing years. The next mention of Houdon's claim is to be found in a letter sent by Du Pont de Nemours to Jefferson at the beginning of 1802.

The old Physiocrat, who had just arrived in New York, described the plight of the artist, and reminded the President that Houdon's claim had never been settled. He added that he had been asked by the artist to sell for him a marble bust of Benjamin Franklin which he offered to be placed in the Capitol for *cent louis,* about four hundred dollars. It is possible that this is the bust which finally found its place in the Metropolitan Museum of New York (*MS. February 20, 1802*).

Jefferson communicated at once with James Monroe, who answered on March 14, 1802, that he would be glad to recommend whatever action would be fair to the artist and the State, but that he needed some more information "to establish the facts." As for the bust of Franklin, there was no special fund permitting its purchase and the matter had to be left in abeyance until the next session of the Legislature.

On March 21st, Gouverneur Morris sent Jefferson a long letter which threw very little light on the subject. Morris explained that he had been somewhat embarrassed in dealing with Houdon, for he had not succeeded Jefferson as accredited agent of the Commonwealth of Virginia. He declared however that Grand had misunderstood or misrepresented his real position in the statement appended by Houdon to his letter of September 1796, and that he had frequently told Houdon "it was a business in which he had no concern nor authority." No wonder Jefferson wrote Monroe that Morris's letter gave "little insight" into the case of Houdon (*March 31, 1802*).

The papers found by Monroe at Richmond were not much more satisfactory. As Monroe expressed it, the question seemed to be to determine exactly the depreciation of the French livres at the time the last payment was made (*April 12, 1802* and *April 25, 1802*).

On May 12, however, Du Pont de Nemours had the impression that Houdon's claims were about to be settled, for he declared that Houdon was to be "moins malheureux" (*MS. May 12, 1802*). Nothing was done however until Monroe himself went to Paris. Shortly after his arrival, he asked Fulmer Skipwith to examine the accounts and to make a recommendation. Skipwith estimated that at the time of the last payment, on November 29, 1792, the depreciation amounted to 2800 livres against the 3375 livres claimed by Houdon, and the French artist accepted the sum thus determined in full settlement of his account on June 16, 1803.

On August 12th, Monroe sent the Governor of Virginia, John Page, a full account of the transaction. He recited how on his arrival in Paris, poor Houdon had applied to him for justice, how his claim had been recognized as just, and how he had taken upon himself to order without further delay the payment of the balance.

Thus was ended, in a way satisfactory to both parties, a painful situation for which political conditions more than persons were to blame. The business was ended, but further mention of Houdon is to be found in the Jefferson papers. A letter written in 1816 to Nathaniel Macon contains a very interesting sidelight on Houdon's trip to America. It appears from this letter that personally Jefferson favored at first the choice of Canova for the statue of Washington, but that Canova was decidedly unwilling to come to America. This circumstance alone would have determined the employment of Houdon, who was however acknowledged by Jefferson as "the first artist in France" at the time (*January 22, 1816*).

Three years later, William Short wrote to his master and friend to mention the fact that he had just offered to the Philosophical Society of Philadelphia a marble bust of Condorcet which he had obtained from the La Rochefoucauld family. Although Mr. Giacometti has raised some doubts on the exact designation of the bust in the Philosophical Society, the letter of Short seems to leave little doubt on its attribution.

The last document concerning Houdon in the Jefferson papers is a letter written to John H. Sherburne in July 1825. It constitutes a last tribute to the French artist whose bust of John Paul Jones is highly praised for its "excellent likeness."

Acknowledgments are gratefully made to Dr. H. R. McIlwaine, Librarian of the Virginia State Library, who procured the photographs of Houdon's works in Richmond; to Dr. Fiske Kimball, Director of

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GILBERT CHINARD.

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HOUDON

BY

REMBRANDT PEALE

PENNSYLVANIA ACADEMY OF THE FINE ARTS

THE STATUE OF WASHINGTON

RESOLUTION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA[1]

June 22, 1784.

Resolved, that the Executive be requested to take measures for procuring a statue of General Washington to be of the finest marble, and best workmanship, with the following inscription on its pedestal:

The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia
Have caused this statue to be erected
As a monument of affection and gratitude to

GEORGE WASHINGTON

Who
Uniting to the Endowments of the Hero the Virtues of the Patriot
And exerting both in establishing the liberties of his country
Has rendered his name dear to his fellow citizens
And given the World an immortal example
Of true Glory.

THE BUST OF LAFAYETTE

RESOLUTION OF THE HOUSE OF DELEGATES[2]

[December 1, 1784.]

Whereas, it was unanimously resolved, on the 17th day of December 1781, that a bust of the Marquis de la Fayette be directed to be made in Paris, of the best marble employed for such purpose, with the following inscription:

This bust was voted on the 17th day of December 1781, by the General Assembly of the State of Virginia, to the Honorable the Marquis

[1] *The Writings of George Washington,* edited by Worthington C. Ford. Vol. X, 395. Also in Hart and Biddle, p. 182.

[2] Hening's "Statutes of Virginia." Vol. XI, 553. In Hart and Biddle, pp. 227, 229-230.

de la Fayette (Major General in the service of the United States of America and late Commander-in-Chief of the army of the United States in Virginia), as a lasting monument of his merit and of their gratitude.

Resolved unanimously, that the Governor, with the advice of the Council, be authorized and desired to defray the expense of carrying the said vote into execution, out of the fund allotted for the contingencies of government; that he cause said bust to be presented, in the name of the Commonwealth, to the city of Paris, with a request that the same may be accepted and preserved in some public place of the said city.

Resolved unanimously, that as a further mark of the lasting esteem, of this Commonwealth, for the illustrious qualities and services of the Marquis de la Fayette, the Governor, with the advice of the Council, be authorized and desired to cause another bust of him, with a similar inscription, to be procured by draught on the said fund, and that same, when procured, be fixed in such public place, at the seat of government, as may hereafter be appointed for the erection of the statue voted by the General Assembly to General Washington.

S[T] JOHN CRÈVECOEUR TO THOMAS JEFFERSON [1]

Boston, 1[st] Sept[re], 1784.

Sir,

dining the other day with H. E. Govr. Hancock, I was shew'd a Virginia Gazette wherein I saw with the most sincere pleasure a Vote of Your House, ordering a white Marble Statue of General Washington to be Executed in Paris under your Care: I observed also an order from Genl. Hamilton to Mr. Peale forthwith to draw a whole-length Picture of that Great Man, to be forwarded to you; this Last CirComstance is the Reason I have for troubling you this day—the most perfectly painted ressemblance, in my opin-

[1] Jefferson papers, Library of Congress.

ion, is Insufficient to Enable a Statuary, however skillfull, to represent perfectly the desired object; if this is really the Case, some other Means must be Look'd for, in order to procure the true features, & the most perfect ressemblance of that General—so Great is my veneration for him that I most Earnestly wish that the French artists may give us an exact *Copy* if I dare use that word, & a Striking representation of that Head to the Internal organisation of which we are all so highly Indebted—there are but two Means of obtaining this end; 1st the Presence of the General—but he is too Great to visit Europe,—2ly a *Mould En Creux* of his Face; without it the Statuary never will make General Wash: breathe in Marble—For that purpose few Pounds of Ready baked Plaister should be sent to Mr Peal with proper directions how to pulverise it, & how to take the Impression of that General's Face; by obtaining his consent to the operation (a Little Novel for an American I acknowledge)—It may be done Two Ways—1st. a certain Quantity of this Pulverised Plaister must be mixed with a proportionate one of water in a Large Bowl; an Instant before it hardens Itself, the General having previously annointed his face with oyl, must Condescend to Stoop & Impress it on the Plastick surface—few seconds are Sufficient for this operation—this Mould once obtained must be very Carefully Pack'd up & sent back To you & with it you Easily conceive with what Ease the Statuary can obtain the True Lineaments of the face by casting into it Liquid Plaister—the Second Method Wou'd be still more desagreable, because it Wou'd require the partial application of some plaister on the face, which when dried & reunited wou'd equally, tho' not so precisely, procure the desired Mould—this Statue is to go down to posterity, thousand of Busts will be made from it at Paris either in Terre Cuite, Plaister or Bronse; it cannot therefore resemble to nearly to the original—Such are the hints which I have thought myself obliged to Communicate you,

being Equally anxious with the rest of the Americans to contribute my mite Towards the completion of this Great Monument of Publick Gratitude & Respect I believe that from the mode of Your Embarkation here, Col. Humphreys will be at Paris before You—I hope the Sea Voyage, the change of climate &c. has been usefull to your health as well as to that of Miss Jefferson, who has at last accomplish'd her desire of Seeing 9 States out of 13—I dread the reflections which so many new & singular Political & Religious objects will unavoidably raise in Your Mind—the Marquis de Chatelux has no doubt Introduced you to the Prince de Beauveau as well as to the Family of La Rochefoucauld for which Good Personages I Intended, had you returned to New York, to have given You Letters. I Earnestly beg you'd Inquire for Mr. Target avocat au Parlement Rue Ste. Croix de la Bretonnerie Marais Paris—you'll find in him a most Enlighten'd head united with a most excellent heart, he will be to you the most usefull, agreable, & Interesting acquaintance you possibly can make,—& in a Little while I am sure you'll Love & Esteem him as much as I do—I write him concerning Govr. Jefferson. I hope you have not forgot the Magnolia Seeds—I have duely a note of the Marchand at Richmond who is to send me a Box for you, which I shall not fail to forward as expeditiously as possible. I shall address it to the directeurs des Messagerie a Lorient, which is I am told the most Eligible way of sending any thing to France—would you be so good as to present my best respects to the M^{is} de Chatelux—the M^{s} de la Fayette arrived in New York the 4th of august & 2 days after he proceeded for Virginia: every body here have been Glad to see him again—I wish you Very Sincerely health & Good acquaintances as well as an happy completion of the Treaty of commerce you are about Settling & am with unfeigned Respect & Esteem

Sir Your Very Humble Serv^{t}

S^{T} JOHN

THOMAS JEFFERSON TO WASHINGTON [1]

December 10, 1784.

The Executive of our State have remitted, to Dr. Franklin and myself the care of having the statue made, which the Assembly directed as a mark of their gratitude to you. I was unwell when I received the letter and have not yet been able to see and confer with Dr. Franklin on the subject. I find that a Monsieur Houdon, of this place, possesses the reputation of being the first statuary in the world. I sent for him and had some conversation with him on the subject. He thinks it cannot be perfectly done from a picture, and is so enthusiastically fond of being the executor of this work, that he offers to go to America for the purpose of forming your bust from the life, leaving all his business here in the meantime. He thinks that being there three weeks with you would suffice to make his model of plaister, with which he will return here, and the work will employ him three years. If Dr. Franklin concurs with me, we shall send him over, not having the time to ask your permission and await your answer. I trust that, having given your Country so much of your time heretofore, you will add the short space which this operation will require, to enable them to transmit to posterity the form of the person whose actions will be delivered to them by history. Monsieur Houdon is at present engaged in making a statue of the King of France. A bust of Voltaire executed by him is said to be the finest in the world.

THOMAS JEFFERSON TO GOVERNOR HARRISON [2]

January 12, 1785.

There could be no question raised as to the Sculptor who should be employed; the reputation of Mons. Houdon, of

[1] Sparks, "Correspondence of the American Revolution," IV, 83. In Hart and Biddle, p. 186.

[2] Ford's "Writings of Jefferson," IV, 26.

this city, being unrivalled in Europe. He is resorted to for the statues of most of the sovereigns in Europe. On conversing with him, Dr. Franklin and myself became satisfied that no statue could be executed so as to obtain the approbation of those to whom the figure of the original is known, but on actual view by the artist. Of course no statue of Gnl. Washington which might be a true evidence of his figure to posterity could be made from his picture. Statues are made every day from portraits; but if the person be living they are always condemned by those who know him for want of resemblance, and this furnishes a conclusive presumption that similar representatives of the dead are equally unfaithful. Mons. Houdon, whose reputation is such as to make it a principal object, was so anxious to be the person who should hand down the figure of the General to future ages, that without hesitating a moment he offered to abandon his business here, to leave the statues of Kings unfinished, and to go to America to take the true figure by actual inspection and mensuration. We believe from his character that he will not propose any very considerable sum for making this journey; probably two or three hundred guineas, as he must necessarily be absent three or four months, and his expenses will make at least a hundred guineas of the money. When the whole merit of the piece was to depend upon this previous expenditure, we could not doubt your approbation of the measure; and that you would think with us that things that are handsome or just should never be done by halves. We shall regulate the article of expense as oeconomically as we can with justice to the wishes of the world. This article, together with habit, attitude, devices, etc., are now under consideration, and till they be decided on, we cannot ultimately contract with Mons. Houdon. We are agreed in one circumstance, that the size shall be precisely that of life. Were we to have executed a statue in any other case, we should have preferred making it somewhat larger than life; because, as they are generally a little elevated, they appear smaller, but we think it im-

portant that some one monument should be preserved of the true size as well as figure, from which all other countries, and our own, at any future day when they shall desire it, may take copies, varying them in their dimensions as may suit the particular situation in which they wish to place them. The duty as well as the glory of this presentation belongs peculiarly to Virginia. We are sensible that the eye alone considered will not be quite as well satisfied; but connecting the consideration that the whole and every part of it presents the true size of life, we suppose the beholders will receive a greater pleasure on the whole. Should we agree with Mons. Houdon, he will come over in the April packet and of course may be expected in Virginia about the last of May. His stay with the General will be about a month. This will be employed in forming his bust of plaister. With this he will return to Paris, and will then be between two and three years in executing the whole in marble.

CLOUET TO THOMAS JEFFERSON[1]

L'Orient, le 28e Janvier 1785.

J'ai l'honneur, Monsieur, de vous prevenir que M. de Marbois consul general à Philadelphie m'a fait passer dernierement par le Nre. La Reine de france, une caisse qu'il m'a prié de vous faire parvenir, et qui doit renfermer le portrait du Général Washington. Je l'ai fait soigneusement emballer et plomber. Elle partira Dimanche prochain 30 de ce mois par la messagerie. Le conducteur est porteur d'un acquit à caution que je vous prie de vouloir bien me renvoyer déchargé.

J'ai l'honneur d'être avec une très parfaite considération, Monsieur, Votre très humble et très obéissant serviteur

CLOUET.

Addressed: M. Thomas Jefferson.

Endorsed: Clouet Commissaire de la Marine à l'Orient.

[1] Jefferson papers, Library of Congress.

THOMAS JEFFERSON TO CLOUET[1]

J'ai reçu Mons[r] la lettre que vous m'avez fait l'honneur de m'ecrire et je differais d'y répondre en attendant toujours l'arrivée de la caisse renfermant le portrait du gen[l] W. afin que je puisse en même tems vous en annoncer la réception. je commençois de craindre que quelque malheur l'avoit rencontré chemin faisant, lorsque y reflechissant hier au soir il m'a venu dans l'esprit qu'il pourroit [*avoir*] être arrivé à Paris & qu'on en attendoit la demande. j'ai tout de suite ordonné les recherches nécessaires [*qui ont été suivies de succès*]. je suis heureux de vous en annoncer le succès. on l'a trouvé qui étoit arrivé il y avoit plusieurs semaines. je le crois de mon devoir de vous en faire part au plutot et de vous addresser mes remerciemens pour toutes les soins que vous avez eu la bonté d'y donner. j'ai l'honneur d'être avec [*la plus grand respect*] considération Mons votre très humble & très obéissant serviteur.[2]

Endorsed: Clouet.

S[t] JOHN CRÈVECOEUR TO THOMAS JEFFERSON[3]

New York, 18[th] May 1785.

Sir

I am much obliged to You for Your Good & Kind Letter—I never knew before of Your having been Sick—happy am I to hear from Yourself, that You are Great deal better—Your Idea of having the Statuary to come over himself, was the only Infallible one—I am Waiting for the arrival

[1] Jefferson papers, Library of Congress.

[2] Words in brackets and in italics are crossed out in the manuscript. This draft is undated, but the letter of Clouet which precedes indicates the approximate date.

[3] Jefferson papers, Library of Congress.

Courtesy of the Pennsylvania Museum
Memorial Hall, Philadelphia

FRANKLIN

AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

of the April Packet with Impatience, it will be une Epoque dans les Arts that so renowned a Statuary shou'd Cross the Seas himself To Take the Bust of so renowned a Man—I am much obliged To You for the directions You sent to Virginia they have Proved of no avail, I have Rece'd nothing. I wrote Myself to richmond Last Fall, & have had no answer; that is both a loss & a disappoint'—Luckily my Good Friend the Vice consul of Carolina Sent me an assortment wherein I found the Magnolia Grandyflora & D° umbrella—I have obtained a Conge of 6 Months & so expect to have the Pleasure of Seeing you in Nov^re^ I am much obliged To you for Your Care in correcting errors in the Cultivator's Letters—I lost so many Manuscripts whilst I was confined, that tis no wonder Errors in Facts shou'd have made their way in my Poor composition—for I am no author—I lost my Sketches of Maryland & So on Southerly & Perhaps it is for the best—Cou'd not you help me to them in case of a Second Edition—Pardon the thought It is not Vanity that Inspires it, but a desire that the Second Edition might be more usefull & more correct than the first.—As I was saying I am no author mais seulement un Ecriveur, which my Singular destiny has Led from the *actual* Cultivation of my Field To be a consul, & from Sketching what I saw & Felt for a Friend, To be an author—I am but a Scribbler after all, but if the European can form a better Idea of the united States than before I am Satisfyed; for altho' a French Consul I am a Citizen of one of these States & a considerable Freeholder—if you had some Anecdotes To Communicate me I'd willingly Inrich with them the Second re'appearance of the 2 Vol: & shou'd Put your name To them—I have collected Materials Enough for a 3^d^ Vol: which wou'd be really Instructif if it was thought Proper by the connoisseurs—God Preserve Your health you are

now in a fine Climat Receive I beg the Tokens of the Esteem & the Respect with which I have the Honor To be

Sir Your Very Humble Servt

ST JOHN

THOMAS JEFFERSON TO JOHN ADAMS [1]

Paris, July 7, 1785.

Monsieur Houdon has agreed to go to America to take the figure of General Washington. In case of his death, between his departure from Paris, and his return to it, we may lose twenty thousand livres. I ask the favor of you to enquire what it will cost to ensure that sum, on his life, in London, and to give me as early an answer as possible, that I may order the insurance if I think the terms easy enough. He is, I believe, between thirty and thirty-five years of age, healthy enough, and will be absent about six months.

THOMAS JEFFERSON TO WASHINGTON [2]

Paris, July 10, 1785.

Dear Sir

Mr Houdon would much sooner have had the honour of attending you but for a spell of sickness which long gave us to despair of his recovery & from which he is but recently recovered. he comes now for the purpose of lending the aid of his art to transmit you to posterity. he is without rivalship in it, being employed from all parts of Europe in whatever is capital. he has had a difficulty to withdraw himself from an order of the Empress of Russia, a difficulty however which arose from a desire to shew her respect, but which never gave him a moment's hesitation about his present voyage which he considers as promising the brightest

[1] *Memorial edition,* V, 33.

[2] Jefferson papers, Library of Congress.

chapter of his history. I have spoke of him as an Artist only; but I can assure you also that, as a man, he is disinterested, generous, candid, & panting after glory: in every circumstance meriting your good opinion. he will have need to see you much while he shall have the honour of being with you, which you can the more freely admit as his eminence and merit gives him admission into genteel societies here. he will need an interpreter. I supposed you could procure some person from Alexandria who might be agreeable to yourself to perform this office. he brings with him a subordinate workman or two, who of course will associate with their own class only . . . .

THOMAS JEFFERSON TO THE GOVERNOR OF VIRGINIA [1]

[Patrick Henry]

Paris, July 11. [1785]

Sir

M[r] Houdon's long & desperate illness has retarded till now his departure for Virginia. we had hoped from our first conversations with him that it would be easy to make our terms, and that the cost of the statue and expence of sending him would be but about a thousand guineas. but when we came to settle this precisely, he thought himself obliged to ask vastly more. insomuch that at one moment we thought our treaty at an end. but unwilling to commit such a work to an inferior hand, we made him an ultimate proposition on our part. he was as much mortified at the prospect of not being the executor of such a work, as we were, not to have it done by such a hand. he therefore acceded to our terms, tho' we are satisfied he will be a consid-

[1] Jefferson papers, Library of Congress. Published in part by Hart and Biddle, p. 197.

erable loser. we were led to insist on them because in a former letter to the Governor I had given the hope we entertained of bringing the whole within 1000 guineas. the terms are 25,000 livres or 1000 English guineas (the English guinea being worth 25. livres) for the statue & pedestal. besides this we pay his expences going & returning, which we expect will be between four & five thousand livres: and if he dies in the voyage we pay his family 10,000 livres. this latter proposition was disagreeable to us. but he has a father, mother & sisters who have no resource but in his labour: and he is himself one of the best men in the world. he therefore made it a sine quo non, without which all would have been off. we have reconciled it to ourselves by determining to get insurance on his life made in London, which we expect can be done for 5. per cent, so that it becomes an additional sum of 500 livres. I Have written to Mr Adams to know for what per cent the insurance can be had. I inclose you, for a more particular detail, a copy of the agreement. Dr Franklin being on his departure did not become a party to the instrument, tho it has been concluded with his approbation. he was disposed to give 250 guineas more, which would have split the difference between the actual terms & Mr Houdon's demand. I wish the state, at the conclusion of the work may agree to give him this much more, because I am persuaded he will be a loser, which I am sure their generosity would not wish, but I have not given him the smallest expectation of it, chusing the proposition should come from the state which will be more honourable. You will perceive by the agreement that I pay him immediately 8333⅓ livres, which is to be employed in getting the marble in Italy, it's transportation &c. the package & transportation of his stucco to make the moulds will be about 500 livres. I shall furnish him with money for his expenses in France & I have authorized D^{r} Franklin when he arrives in Philadelphia to draw on me for money for his other ex-

penses going, staying & returning. these draughts will have been made probably & will be on their way to me before you receive this, & with the paiments made here will amount to about 5000 livres more than the amount of the bill remitted me. another third, of 8333⅓ livres will become due at the end of the ensuing year. D^r^ Franklin leaves Passy this morning. as he travels in a litter, Mr Houdon will follow him some days hence and will embark with him for Philadelphia. I am in hopes he need not stay in America more than a month.

I have the honour to be with due respect your Excellency's

Most obedient

& most humble serv^t^

TH: JEFFERSON

THOMAS JEFFERSON TO THE VIRGINIA DELEGATES [1]

Paris, July 12, 1785.

Gentlemen,

In consequence of the orders of the Legislative & Executive bodies of Virginia, I have engaged Mons^r^ Houdon to make the Statue of Gen^l^ Washington. for this purpose it is necessary for him to see the General. he therefore goes with Doct^r^ Franklin, & will have the honor of delivering you this himself. as his journey is at the expence of the state according to our contract, I will pray you to favor him with your patronage & counsels, and to protect him as much as possible from those impositions to which strangers are but too much exposed. I have advised him to proceed in the stages to the General's. I have also agreed, if he can see Generals Greene & Gates, whose busts he has a desire to make, that he may make a moderate deviation for this purpose, after he is done with General Washington.

But the most important object with him is to be employed to make General Washington's equestrian statue for Con-

[1] Jefferson papers, Library of Congress.

gress. nothing but the expectation of this could have engaged him to have undertaken this voiage, as [*mutilated*] for Virginia will not make it worth the business he [*mutilated*] -ing himself. I was therefore obliged to assure him of my recom[mendation] for this greater work. having acted in this for the state, you will [*mutilated*] think yourselves in some measure bound to patronize & urge his being employed by Congress. I would not have done this myself, nor asked you to do it did I not see that it would be better for Congress to put this business into his hands, than into those of any other person living, for these reasons: 1. he is without rivalship the first statuary of this age; as a proof of which he receives orders from every other country for things intended to be capital: 2. he will have seen General Washington, have taken his measure in every part, and of course whatever he does of him will have the merit of being original, from which other workmen can only furnish copies: 3. he is in possession of the house, the furnaces, & all the apparatus provided for making the statue of Louis XV. if any other workman is employed, this will all be [*sic*] to be provided anew and of course to be added to the price of the statue, for no man can ever expect to make two equestrian statues. the addition which this would be to the price will much exceed the expectation of any person who has not seen that apparatus. in truth it is immense. as to the price of the work it will be much greater than Congress is aware of, probably. I have enquired somewhat into this circumstance, and find the prices of those made for two centuries past have been from 120,000 guineas down to 16,000 guineas, according to the size. and as far as I have seen, the smaller they are, the more agreeable. the smallest yet made is infinitely above the size of the life, and they all appear outrée and monstrous. that of Louis XV is probably the best in the world, and it is the smallest here. Yet it is impossible to find a point of view from which it does not

WASHINGTON

CAPITOL, RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

appear a monster, unless you go so far as to lose sight of the features and finer lineaments of the face and body. a statue is not made, like a mountain, to be seen at a great distance. to perceive those minuter circumstances which constitute it's beauty you must be near it, and, in that case, it should be so much above the size of the life, as to appear actually of that size from your point of view. I should not therefore fear to propose that the one intended by Congress should be considerably smaller than any of those to be seen here; as I think it will be more beautiful, and also cheaper. I have troubled you with these observations as they have been suggested to me from an actual sight of works in this kind, & supposed they might assist you in making up your minds on this subject. in making a contract with Mons[r] Houdon it would not be proper to advance money, but as his disbursements and labour advance, as it is a work of many years, this will render the expence insensible. the pedestrian statue of marble is to take three years. the equestrian of course much more. therefore the sooner it is begun the better.

TABLEAU DE CE QU'ON COUTÉ PLUSIEURS STATUES EN BRONZE ET LE NOM DES ARTISTES QUI LES ONT EXÉCUTÉES [1]

Mr. falconet fut apellé en Russie pour y faire la Statue Equestre en Bronze de Pierre le Grand à Petersbourg aux conditions suivantes; etre Logé et defrayé jusqu'à ce que son ouvrage fut entierement finit, que s'il arrivoit par maladie ou quelque autre accidens le tems et les travaux se trouvassent prolongés au dela de huit ans, Mr. falconet s'en raporte du tout à l'equité de sa majesté impériale, aux dépens de laquelle il continueroit d'être Logé et défrayé, ne

[1] Jefferson papers, Library of Congress. Houdon's spelling has not been corrected.

pouvant etre garant d'accidens qu'il n'a pu prevoir.—de plus de l'Imperatrice il recevoit 25,000 par an, son voyage de Paris à Petersbourg et son retour dans cette ville payé.—qu'il ne devoit recevoir d'ordres que de sa majesté I. soit par elle même soit par son ministre. Mr. Le Prince de Gallitsin Ministre de Russie luy avoit offert de la part de la cour 400,000 il ne voulut en prendre que 200,000. Mr. Pajou demandoit 600,000 Mr. Coustou 450,000. Mr. Vassée 400,000. Le fondeur devoit recevoir 140,000 imédiatement la fonte faite; si elle ne reussissoit pas, en outre 10,000 par an pour la recomencer. Les frais d'Attelier regardoient la Cour.—La Statue Equestre en Bronze de frederic cinq à Coppenhague fut faite par Mr. Sally. on lui dona pour son modèle et ses soins donés au reparage du Bronze 600,000. Il est vrai qu'il y avoit à ce Bronze fondu par Goor plus de trois mille pieces grandes et petites. Une pension de 5000 la vie durante de Mr. Saly et dont il a joui deux ans après son arrivée à Coppenhague. Il eut de plus 9000 de pension dont 4500 jusqu'à la fin de l'ouvrage et 4500 autres, payés par le Roy jusqu'à sa mort, de plus une gratification de 36,000 pour les deux voyages du fondeur 40,000 par an et 12,000 et 2000 de rente après la fonte. Il resta environ quatre ans à Coppenhague et en partit avec près de 200,000. Il demandoit pour aller à Petersbourg fondre la statue de Pierre le Grand—480,000, enfin pour frais d'ouvriers et tout ce qui s'est depensé pendant 18 ou 19 qu'a duré cet ouvrage, il couta à la Compagnie des Indes 2,200,000 à quoi le Roy ajouta dit on 600,000, ce qui fait en tout près de 3,000,000. Mr Bouchardon qui a comencé la Statue Equestre en bronze de Louis 15 roi de france, qui est à Paris a joui pendant 15 ans, c'est a dire jusqu'à sa mort qui la surprit au milieu d'une pension de 15,000 par an.

Endorsed: Houdon. Equestrian statue.

EXTRACT OF THE PRICE OF SEVERAL STATUES IN BRONZE AND THE NAMES OF THE ARTISTS[1]

Mr Falconet was called to Russia to execute in Brass an Equestrian Statue of Peter the Great at Petersbourg on the following conditions,—to be Lodged and defrayed till his work was entirely done; if by Sickness or by Some other accidents the time and the Works was prolonged beyond eight years, Mr Falconet refered himself entirely to the equity of her G. Majesty at whose charge he was to continue to be Lodged and defrayed, as it was not possible for him to guard against accidents he could not foresee.—He received from the Emperess 25,000 per between his Journey from Paris to Petersbourg and his return to Paris payed. he was to receive no orders of any one but from her G. Majesty or her Minister. the Prince of Gallitsin Minister of Russia had offered him by the orders of the court 400,000 which he refused and would have but 200,000.—the founder was to receive 140,000 immediately upon the Casting being done, if it failed 10,000 more per Anum to begin again; the expences of the work house was to be at the charge of the Court.—the Equestrian Statue in Bronze of Frederic the fifth at Coppenhague was executed by Mr Sally, he received for his Model and the Cares of repairing the Brass 600,000; it is true there was to this Bronze which had been cast by Goor more than three thousand pieces great and small. an anuity of 5000 the Life of Mr Sally and which he enjoyed two years after his arrival at Coppenhague, besides an Annuity of 9000 where of 4500 till the end of his work and 4500 payed by the King till his death; and 36,000 gratification besides.—for the two Journeys of the founder 40,000, 12,000 per Annum and an annuity of 2000

[1] Jefferson papers, Library of Congress.

after the Casting. he Stayed about four Years at Coppenhague and returned home with near 200,000; he asked for going to Petersbourg to Cast the Statue of Peter the Great 480,000: in short for expences of Workmen and all the other expences during the space of 18 or 19 years which this work Lasted, it cost to the Indian Company 2,200,000 to which Sum the King added it is said 600,000 which is very near 3,000 000 on the whole.—Mr Bouchardon who began the Equestrian Statue in Bronze of Lewis 15 King of france, in Paris, enjoyed during fifteen years, that is till his Death which happen[ed] in the middle of his works, an annuity of 15,000.—

MEMORANDUM OF HOUDON[1]

Mons[r] Houdon demande pour l'execution de la Statue Equestre en bronze du general Washington, jouissant des ateliers de la ville qui renferme les fourneaux propre à cette fonte et le logement qui y est attaché—La somme de 600,000 et dix ans à dater de ce moment pour l'exécuter en suposant que le marché soit signé des deux partis dans le courant de cette année. Le prix accordé, les sommes seront distribuées comme il conviendra au Congrès, representant néanmoins qu'il y a infiniment de déboursé à faire les premières années.

Il croit devoir engager le Sénat a faire jetter en fonte cet ouvrage en deux parties, c'est a dire le Général et le Cheval separement, et sans que celui nuise nullement à l'unité de cet ouvrage qui en y reflechissant bien y gagneroit de toute part—fonte, exécution, solidité et facilité dans le transport, il insiste sur ce point par l'experience que luy et *ses ouvriers*

[1] Jefferson papers, Library of Congress. Another copy endorsed *Copy W. Short Secr[y]* and marked in pencil *June 29, 1786,* is also preserved in the Jefferson papers. There is no difference between the two texts, but Short's French spelling, amusingly enough, was far better than Houdon's.

ont tachez d'acquerir pour se rendre capables, il ne conoit pas de fondeur habile existant maintenant sur lesquels il pussent compter comme sur ceux qu'il a dressé luy même à grands frais depuis 15 ans qu'il possède les fourneaux ou la statue equestre de Louis 15 Roy de France a été fondue.— Ceux quon a employez dans cette fonte sont mors a present.

MEMORANDUM OF HOUDON [1]

[Translation]

Mr Houdon in possession of the Work house of the City of Paris employed for Casting Large Works in Bronze and Dwelling upon the Spot where they are erected, requires for the erection of an Equestrian Statue of General Washington in Bronze the Sum of L 600 000, and the term of ten years from the present instant for the finishing of it.—in case the bargain should be Signed by both party's in the course of the present year.—
the price being agreed on he Submits the Distribution of the payements to the convenience of the Congress; Submitting however to their consideration that the heaviest part of the expence will fall upon him in the first years.

He thinks he ought to recommend to have the work performed in two Seperate Casts, that is the General in one Cast & the Horse in another. Since this Method would not be any prejudice to the Uniformity of the Whole Work; which on the contrary would be benefitted in every part, as well in it's execution, as in it's Solidity and facility of Transportating it. Mr Houdon insists the rather upon this point from the experience he and his work men have acquired in their endeavour to perfect themselves, as he knows of no founder at present equal in Ability to those which he has himself instructed at a great expence during 15 years that he has been in possession of the City foundery's where

[1] Jefferson papers, Library of Congress.

the Equestrian Statue of Lewis XV. was Cast, and those who were employed in that work are now Dead.

MEMORANDUM OF HOUDON [1]

Si la statue Pédestre que le Sieur Houdon a été chargé d'executer en marbre pour les Etats de la Virginie pouvoit étant en bronze convenir aux Etats-Unis de l'Amérique il pourroit peut etre proposer aux Etats—Unis un prix et des conditions qui leur seroient agréables et comodes.—La situation critique des affaires de la france qui prive toutes les classes d'argent et de travaux, la grandeur des fourneaux construits par le S[r] Houdon, convenable pour fondre une statue comme celle pédestre du général Washington, tout cela le met à même de mettre à cette fonte un prix bien au dessous de celuy qu'il seroit forcé de demander s'il étoit obligé de créer un nouveau modèle et de construire de nouveaux fourneaux.

Il s'engageroit donc à faire la Statue en Bronze entierement semblable à celle en Marbre destinée aux Etats de Virginie, en l'espace de quatre ans pour la somme de soixante mille livres sous les conditions de luy payer vingt mille livres lors de la signature du marché ou trois mois après au choix des Etats, et les quarante mille livres restant au moment ou l'ouvrage sera absolument terminé; bien entendu que les frais de transport seront au Compte des Etats-Unis.

Endorsed: Houdon. Statue of Gen[l]. Washington.

THOMAS JEFFERSON TO JOHN ADAMS [2]

August 10, 1785.

I will pray you to insure Houdon's life from the 27th of last month till his return to Paris. As he was to stay in

[1] Jefferson papers, Library of Congress.
[2] *Memorial edition,* V, 59.

Courtesy of the Pennsylvania Museum
Memorial Hall, Philadelphia

LAFAYETTE

CAPITOL, RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

America a month or two, he will probably be about six months absent; but the three per cent. for the voyage being once paid, I suppose they will insure his life by the month, whether his absence be longer or shorter. The sum to be insured is fifteen thousand livres tournois. If it be not necessary to pay the money immediately, there is a prospect of exchange becoming more favorable. But whenever it is necessary, be so good as to procure it by selling a draft on Mr. Grand, which I will take care shall be honored.

THOMAS JEFFERSON TO THE GOVERNOR OF VIRGINIA [1]

Paris, Aug. 22, 1785.

Sir,

I was honoured yesterday with your Excellency's letter of June the 16th inclosing the resolution of the Assembly relative to the busts of the M. de la Fayette. I shall render chearfully any services I can in aid of Mr. Barclay for carrying this resolution into effect. The M. de la Fayette being to pass into Germany & Prussia it was thought proper to take the model of his bust in plaister before his departure. Monsr Houdon was engaged to do it & did it accordingly. So far Mr. Barclay had thought himself authorized to go in consequence of orders formerly received. You will be so good as to instruct me as to the monies hereafter to be remitted to me whether I am to apply them solely to the Statue of General Washington, or to that & the Marquis's bust in common as shall be necessary. Supposing you wish to know the application of the monies remitted from time to time, I state hereon an account thereof so far as I am able to present. Before your receipt of this letter I am in hopes mine of July 11 by Monsr Houdon will have come to

[1] Jefferson papers, Library of Congress. Also in *Memorial edition*, V, 92.

your hands. In that I inclosed you a copy of the contract with him. I have the honour to be with due respect your Excellency's

most obedient
& most humble ser^{t}
TH: JEFFERSON

Endorsed: Gov^{or} of Virginia.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN TO WASHINGTON [1]

Philada. Sept. 20, 1785.

Dear Sir,

I am just arrived from a Country, where the Reputation of General Washington runs very high, and where everybody wishes to see him in Person; but, being told that it is not likely he will ever favour them with a Visit, they hope at least for a Sight of his perfect Resemblance by means of their principal Statuary, M. Houdon, whom Mr. Jefferson and myself agreed with to come over for the purpose of taking a bust, in order to make the intended Statue for the State of Virginia. He is here, but, the Materials and Instruments he sent down the Seine from Paris not being arrived at Havre when we sailed, he was obliged to leave them, and is now busied in supplying himself here. As soon as that is done, he proposes to wait on you in Virginia, as he understands there is no Prospect of your coming hither, which would indeed make me very happy; as it would give me an Opportunity of congratulating with you personally on the final Success of your long and painful Labours, in the Service of our Country, which have laid us all under eternal Obligations. With the greatest and most sincere Esteem and Respect, I am, dear Sir, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

[1] *The Writings of Benjamin Franklin,* edited by Albert Henry Smyth, Vol. IX, 464, 465.

EXTRAIT DE LA LETTRE DE MR. HOUDON[1]

Philadelphia, 14 7re 85.

Come je dois employer mon temps à travailler plustot qu'a tout autre chose je vous suplie de m'excuser auprès de Monsieur Jefferson de ce que je ne lui ecris pas dans cet instant & de vouloir bien le prevenir que le capitaine qui s'est chargé de nos persones n'a pu attendre nos effets. ce quil y a de pire pour moy ainsy que pour mon monde est que nous avons été réduit à n'avoir que nos sacs de nuit ce qui nous a necessité d'acheter du linge pour nous embarquer. Icy il faut avec bien plus de necessité encore nous vetir de pied en tete & pendant quon travaillera a nous couvrir, nous chercherons de mattiere en attendant les notres que nous attendons à tout moment. Je crois que les premieres lettres que m'a remis Mons. Jefferson sont dans mes malles restés au havre mais les dernieres sont avec nous.

Mr Giraud a reçu quatre lignes de Mr. Franklin qui s'est mieux porté pendant les 7 semaines de sa traversée que dans une semaine a Paris.[2] Il app— à Monsieur Jefferson de sonder.

THOMAS JEFFERSON TO JOHN ADAMS[3]

Paris, September 24, 1785.

Is insurance made on Houdon's life? I am uneasy about it, lest we should hear of any accident. As yet there is no reason to doubt their safe passage. If the insurance is not made, I will pray you to have it done immediately . . .

[1] Marked in pencil *15 Septembre 1785*, Jefferson papers, Library of Congress.

[2] Franklin sailed from Le Havre on July 22 and arrived in Philadelphia on September 13.

[3] *Memorial edition*, V, 142.

THE DIARIES OF GEORGE WASHINGTON [1]

OCTOBER

Sunday, 2d.

After we were in Bed (about eleven Oclock in the Evening) Mr. Houdon, sent from Paris by Doctr. Franklin and Mr. Jefferson to take my Bust, in behalf of the State of Virginia, with three young men assistants, introduced by a Mr. Perin a French Gentlemen of Alexandria, arrived here by Water from the latter place.

Friday, 7th. Sat to day as I had done yesterday, for Mr. Houdon to form my Bust.

Sunday, 9th. Accompanied by Mr. Houdon and the two Mr. Bassetts, attended the Funeral of Mrs. Manley at the Plantation of Mr. Willm. Triplett, and returned to Dinner.

Monday, 10th.

Observed the process for preparing the Plaister of Paris, and mixing of it, according to Mr. Houdon. The Oven being made hotter than it is usually heated for Bread, the Plaister which had been previously broken into lumps, that which was hard, to about the size of a pullets egg; and that which was soft, and could be broken with the hands, larger; was put in about Noon and remained until Night; when, upon examination, it was further continued until the Morning without any renewal of the heat in the oven, which was close stopped. Having been sufficiently calcined by this operation, it was pulverized (in an Iron Mortar) and sifted for use through a fine lawn sieve, and kept from wet.

When used, it is put into a Bason, or other vessel with water; sifted through the fingers, till the Water is made as thick as Loblolly, or very thick cream. As soon as the plaister is thus put into the Water, it is beat with an Iron spoon

[1] *The Diaries of George Washington (1748-1799)*, edited by John C. Fitzpatrick, published for the Mount Vernon Ladies Association of the Union. Vol. II, 419.

(almost flat) until it is well mixed, and must be immediately applied to the purpose for which it is intended with a Brush, or whatever else best answers, as it begins to turn hard in four or five minutes, and in seven or ten cannot be used, and is fit for no purpose afterwards, as it will not bear wetting a second time. For this reason no more must be mixed at a time than can be used within the space just mentioned.

The brush (common painters) must be put into Water as soon as it is used, and the plaister well squeezed out, or this also becomes very hard. In this case to clean it, it must be beaten till the plaister is reduced to a powder, and then washed.[1]

Wednesday, 19th.

Mr. Houdon having finished the business which brot. him hither, went up on Monday with his People, work, and impliments in my Barge, to Alexandria, to take a Passage in the Stage for Philadelphia the next Morning.[2]

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN TO FERDINAND GRAND[3]

Philada. Oct. 20, 1785.

Dear Sir,

I have written to you twice since my Arrival, but have not yet drawn any Bills on you from hence. Perhaps I may soon draw from the Amount of the Interest that will be due on my Money in the Funds; and I hope soon to hear from you and to receive my Acct. Inclos'd I send you a second Bill of Mr. Houdon's, for which when receiv'd you will credit me. He is this Evening return'd well from Gen. Washington's, having finish'd his Business there, and is preparing to return directly.—

[1] *Idem,* Vol. II, 421, 422.

[2] *Idem,* Vol. II, 426.

[3] *The Writings of Benjamin Franklin,* edited by Albert Henry Smyth, Vol. IX, 471.

I have this Day receiv'd several Letters from Passy, dated Aug. 10. but no Line from you, I suppose you did not hear of the Opportunity. My eldest Grandson is at New York, the other, Benjamin, joins in Respects & best Wishes for you & yours, with

Dear Sir,

Your most obedt

& most humble Servt

B. FRANKLIN

WASHINGTON TO LAFAYETTE [1]

November 8, 1785.

I have now to thank you for your favors of the 9th and 14th of July: the first by M. Houdon, who stayed no more than a fortnight with me, and to whom, for his trouble and risk in crossing the seas (although I had no agency in the business) I feel myself under personal obligations.

THOMAS JEFFERSON TO JOHN ADAMS [2]

Paris, November 19, 1785.

. . . I thank you for the trouble you have taken to obtain insurance on Houdon's life. I place the thirty-two pounds and eleven shillings to your credit, and not being able, as yet, to determine precisely how our account stands, I send a sum by Colonel Smith, which may draw the scales towards a balance . . .

THOMAS JEFFERSON TO WASHINGTON [3]

Paris, January 4, 1786.

Sir,

I have been honoured with your letter of September 26, which was delivered me by Mr. Houdon, who is safely re-

[1] *The Writings of George Washington,* edited by W. C. Ford, Vol. X, 502.

[2] *Memorial edition,* V, 214.

[3] Jefferson papers, Library of Congress. The letter is dated 1785 in the manuscript—an evident error. Also in *Memorial edition,* XIX, 23.

Courtesy of the Pennsylvania Museum
Memorial Hall, Philadelphia

JEFFERSON

AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

turned. He has brought with him a mould of the face only, having left the other part of his work with his workmen to come by some other conveiance. Doctor Franklin, who was joined with me in the superintendance of this just monument, having left us before what is called the costume of the statue was decided on, I canot so well satisfy myself and I am persuaded I should not so well satisfy the world, as by consulting your own wishes or inclination as to this article. Permit me therefore, to ask you whether there is any particular dress or any particular attitude which you would rather wish to be adopted? I shall take a singular pleasure in having your own idea executed if you will be so good as to make it known to me . . .

THOMAS JEFFERSON TO THE GOVERNOR OF VIRGINIA [1]

Paris, Jan. 24, 1786

Sir

I have been honoured with your Excellency's two letters of Sep. 10th and that of Octob. 14. 1785. the former was brought me by mr Houdon, who is returned with the necessary mould & measures for General Washington's statue. I fear the expences of his journey have been considerably increased by the unlucky accident of his tools, materials, clothes &c not arriving at Havre in time to go with him, to America, so that he had to supply himself there. the money which you were so kind as to send by capt Littlepage for the purposes of this statue, he found himself obliged to deposit in New York to satisfy a demand made on him there. this was a debt which he owed to mr Jay. he assures me that in a settlement with his guardian the latter took credit for this debt, so as to be answerable to mr Jay for it, & of course to the state now that mr Jay is paid with the state's

[1] Jefferson papers, Library of Congress.

money. I mention this circumstance that your Excellency may be enabled to take the earliest measures for recovering this money, and indemnifying the state. mr Littlepage, to satisfy me, had obtained from M. de la fayette his engagement to stand bound as mr Littlepage's security for the paiment of this money, but knowing the punctuality & responsibility of his guardian, I did not suppose a security necessary. besides, if a loss was to be incurred, I knew too well the sentiments of the state of Virginia towards the M. de la Fayette to suppose they would be willing to throw that loss on him I therefore acted as I thought your Excellency & the Council would have directed me to act could you have been consulted: I waited on the Marquis and, in his presence, cancelled his name from the obligation which had been given me, leaving only that of mr Littlepage. I have now the honor to inclose you one of those instruments, duplicates of which had been given me by mr Littlepage. the first of the Marquis's busts will be finished next month. I shall present that one to the city of Paris, because the delay has been noticed by some. I hope to be able to send another to Virginia in the course of the summer. these are to cost three thousand livres each. The agreement for the arms has been at length concluded by mr Barclay. he was so much better acquainted with this business than the Marquis Fayette or myself, that we left it altogether to him. we were sensible that they might have been got cheaper, but not so good. however, I suppose he has given you the details of his proceedings so as to render them unnecessary from me. it will be eight months before they will be ready. the cause of this too mr Barclay told me he would explain to you. it is principally to ensure their goodness. the bills remitted to pay for them have been honoured and the money is lodged in mr Grand's hands who was willing to allow a small interest for it.

An improvement is made here in the construction of the musket which may be worthy of attention. it consists in making every part of them so exactly alike, that every part of any one may be used for the same part in any other musket made by the same hand. the government here has examined & approved the method, & is establishing a large manufactory for the purpose. as yet the inventor has only completed the lock of the musket on this plan. he will proceed immediately to have the barrel, stock & their parts executed in the same way. I visited the workman. he presented me the parts of 50 locks, taken to pieces, & arranged in compartments. I put several together myself, taking the pieces at hazard as they came to hand, & found them fit interchangeably in the most perfect manner. the tools by which he affects this have at the same time so abridged the labour that he thinks he shall be able to furnish the musket two livres cheaper than the king's price. but it will be two or three years before he will be able to furnish any quantity. I have duly received the propositions of messrs. Ross, Pleasant &c for furnishing tobacco to the farmers general: but mr Morris had in the mean time obtained the contract. I have been fully sensible of the baneful influence on the commerce of France & America which this double monopoly will have. I have struck at it's root here and spared no pains to have the farm itself demolished. but it has been in vain. the persons interested in it are too powerful to be opposed, even by the interest of the whole country. I mention this matter in confidence, as a knowledge of it might injure any future endeavors to attain the same object.

Every thing is quiet here, and will certainly remain so another year. mr Barclay left Paris a few days ago, & will be absent from France for some time. I shall spare no endeavors to fulfill the several objects with which he was

charged, in the best manner I can. I have the honour to be with sentiments of the highest respect Your Excellency's most obedient

& most humble servant
TH: JEFFERSON

Endorsed: Gov^r^ of Virginia.

THOMAS JEFFERSON TO JAMES MADISON[1]

Paris, February 8, 1786.

Houdon has returned. He called on me, the other day, to remonstrate against the inscription proposed for General Washington's statue. He says it is too long to be put on the pedestal. I told him I was not at liberty to permit any alteration, but I would represent his objection to a friend, who could judge of its validity, and whether a change could be authorized. This has been the subject of conversations here, and various devices and inscriptions have been suggested. The one which has appeared best to me may be translated as follows: " Behold, Reader, the form of George Washington. For his worth, ask History; that will tell it, when this stone shall have yielded to the decays of time. His country erects this monument: Houdon makes it." This for one side. On the second, represent the evacuation of Boston, with the motto, " Hostibus primum fugatis." On the third, the capture of the Hessians, with " Hostibus iterum devictis." On the fourth, the surrender of York, with " Hostibus ultimum debellatis." This is seizing the three most brilliant actions of his military life. By giving out, here, a wish of receiving mottos for this statue, we might have thousands offered, from which still better might be chosen. The artist made the same objection, of length, to the inscription for the bust of the Marquis de La Fayette. An alteration of that might come in time still, if an alteration was wished. However, I am not certain that it is desir-

[1] *Memorial edition,* V, 280.

able in either case. The State of Georgia has given twenty thousand acres of land to the Count d'Estaing. This gift is considered here as very honorable to him, and it has gratified him much. I am persuaded, that a gift of lands by the State of Virginia to the Marquis de La Fayette would give a good opinion here of our character, and would reflect honor on the Marquis. Nor, am I sure that the day will not come when it might be an useful asylum to him. The time of life at which he visited America was too well adapted to receive good and lasting impression to permit him ever to accommodate himself to the principles of monarchical government; and it will need all his own prudence, and that of his friends, to make this country a safe residence for him. How glorious, how comfortable in reflection, will it be, to have prepared a refuge for him in case of a reverse. In the meantime, he could settle it with tenants from the freest part of this country, Bretaigne. I have never suggested the smallest idea of this kind to him; because the execution of it should convey the first notice. If the State has not a right to give him lands with their own officers, they could buy up, at cheap prices, the shares of others. I am not certain, however, whether in the public or private opinion, a similar gift to Count Rochambeau could be dispensed with. If the State could give to both, it would be better; but, in any event, I think they should to the Marquis. Count Rochambeau, too, has really deserved more attention than he has received. Why not set up his bust, that of Gates, Greene, Franklin, in your new capitol?

JAMES MADISON TO THOMAS JEFFERSON[1]

Orange, May 12th, 1786.

The inscription for the Statue is liable to Houdon's criticism, and is in every respect inferior to the substitute which you have copied into your letter. I am apprehensive not-

[1] *The Writings of James Madison,* edited by Gaillard Hunt, Vol. II, 237.

withstanding that no change can be effected. The Assembly will want some proper ground for resuming the matter. The devices for the other side of the pedestal are well chosen, and might I should suppose be applied without scruple as decorations of the artist. I counted myself on the addition of proper ornaments, and am persuaded that such a liberty could give offence nowhere. The execution of your hints with regard to the *Marquis & Rochambeau* would be no less pleasing to me than to you. I think with you also *that the setting up the busts of our own worthies* would not be doing more *honour to them than to ourselves.* I foresee however the difficulty of overcoming the popular objection against every measure which involves expence, particularly where the importance of the measure will be felt by a few only; and an unsuccessful attempt would be worse than no attempt. I have heard nothing as to the Capitol. I mentioned to you in my last that I had written to the Attorney on the subject. I shall have an opportunity shortly of touching on it again to him.

THOMAS JEFFERSON TO RAYNEVAL[1]

Mr Jefferson has the honour of presenting his compliments to Mons[r] de Rayneval & of recalling to his attention the subject he had the honour of mentioning to him in conversation yesterday, relative to the bust of the Marquis de la fayette. the state of Virginia, sensible of the services rendered them in particular by this worthy officer, directed his bust to be made, in marble, and to be presented to the city of Paris, with a request that it might be placed so as to do honour to the Marquis de la Fayette. Mr. Jefferson has been told that he should address himself for this purpose to the Prevot & Echevins de Paris. before he takes this step however he wishes to know whether the respect due to

[1] Jefferson papers, Library of Congress.

JOEL BARLOW

PENNSYLVANIA ACADEMY OF THE FINE ARTS

the king & his ministers would require from him a previous reference of the subject to them. Monsieur de Rayneval's information hereon would be considered as very friendly.
Paris May 17. 1786.
Endorsed: M. Reyneval

WASHINGTON TO THOMAS JEFFERSON [1]

Mount Vernon, 1 August, 1786.

Dear Sir,

The letters you did me the favor to write to me, on the 4th and 7th of January, have been duly received. In answer to your obliging inquiries respecting the dress, attitude, &c., which I would wish to have given to the statue in question, I have only to observe, that, not having sufficient knowledge in the art of sculpture to oppose my judgment to the taste of connoisseurs, I do not desire to dictate in the matter. On the contrary, I shall be perfectly satisfied with whatever may be judged decent and proper. I should even scarcely have ventured to suggest, that perhaps a servile adherence to the garb of antiquity might not be altogether so expedient, as some little deviation in favor of the modern costume, if I had not learnt from Colonel Humphreys, that this was a circumstance hinted in conversation by Mr. West to Mr. Houdon. This taste, which has been introduced in painting by West, I understand is received with applause, and prevails extensively. * * *

THOMAS JEFFERSON TO THE PROVOST OF MARCHANDS [2]

September 27, 1786.

The Commonwealth of Virginia, in gratitude for the services of Major General the Marquis de la Fayette, have

[1] *The Writings of George Washington,* edited by Worthington C. Ford, Vol. XI, 50, 51.

[2] Jefferson papers, Library of Congress. Also in Hart and Biddle, p. 233.

determined to erect his bust in their capital. Desirous to place a like monument of his worth and of their sense of it in the country to which they are indebted for his birth, they have hoped that the city of Paris will consent to become the depository of this second testimony of their gratitude. Being charged by them with the execution of their wishes, I have the honor to sollicit of Messieurs le Prévot des Marchands et Echevins, on behalf of the city, their acceptance of a bust of this gallant officer, and that they will be pleased to place it where, doing most honor to him, it will most gratify the feelings of an allied nation. It is with true pleasure that I obey the call of that Commonwealth to render just homage to a character, so great in its first developments, that they would honor the close of any other. . . . . It would have been more pleasing to me to have executed this offer in person . . . but I am witheld from these grateful duties by the consequences of a fall which confines me to my room. Mr Short therefore a citizen of the state of Virginia . . . . will have the honor of delivering you this letter, together with the resolution of the General Assembly of Virginia. He will have that, also, of presenting the bust at such time and place as you will be so good as to signify your pleasure to receive it, through him.

HOUDON TO LAFAYETTE[1]

Mr. Houdon a l'honneur de prevenir Monsieur de Jefferson que le Buste de Mr. le M[is] de La fayette sera emballé cette semaine et a celuy de Luy envoyer aussi l'adresse de l'emballeur afin que Monsieur de Jefferson puisse luy faire passer les instructions pour l'adresse et la destination de ce Buste—

Ce. 2, 9[re] 1787.

M[r] de Lorme emballeur en sa maison Rue de Grenelle S[t] Honoré vis à vis la rue des deux Pons.

[1] Jefferson papers, Massachusetts Historical Society.

THOMAS JEFFERSON TO JOHN PAUL JONES[1]

Paris, March 23, 1789.

Houdon has promised to have the eight busts ready as soon as possible, and I shall have him paid out of the same fund. They will be ready packed against your orders arrived as to the persons to whom they were destined. For you will please to observe that neither your letter of January 20/31 nor the extracts forwarded in that of . . . and September 16/23 mention the names of the persons they are to be sent to. In like manner your letter of January 20/31 says it incloses an extract of the journal of your campaign in 1779. But none such was inclosed. Mr. Short, now in Italy, will be here to receive your orders for the distribution of the busts. I shall be absent in America from the first of May to the end of November, as I have asked leave to go and carry my family home and arrange my affairs, and shall return before the winter sets in. But the busts will be finished and paid before I go, so that nothing will remain for Mr. Short but to forward them.

THOMAS JEFFERSON TO HOUDON[2]

En fixant l'epoque du second paiement à dix huit mois après la signature du contrat il etoit entendu que l'ouvrage seroit alors à moitié finie. Monsieur Jefferson ne fait pas cette observation à Monsieur Houdon que pour se justifier de ce qu'il ne lui a pas jusques ici proposé de second paiement. Il sçait trop bien apprécier les principes de Monsieur Houdon pour le laisser en butte à une incommodité quelconque en se tenant à la lettre de ce que ses devoirs rigour-

[1] *Memorial edition*, XIX, 56.

[2] Jefferson papers, Library of Congress.

eux lui auront peut etre presenté. Il a l'honneur donc de lui envoyer le mandat de 8000 qu'il lui demande mais comme l'etat de Virginie aura actuellement payé plus de trente mille francs, sans que le bloc de marbre soit encore même attaqué Monsieur Jefferson se croit obligé de supplier Monsieur Houdon de ne pas perdre un instant à suivre ce travail sans relache jusques à ce que ce soit fini. Des delais anterieurs peuvent compromettre Monsieur Jefferson tres désagreablement avec l'etat de Virginie.

Il le prie en même temps d'agréer le mandat pour mille francs pour les objets que Monsieur Houdon a eu la bonté de faire pour Monsieur Jefferson, avec mille assurances de son attachement. Ce 3eme Juillet 1789.

Endorsed on the back: Houdon

NOTTE DES MANDATS DE SON EXCELLENCE MONSIEUR DE JEFFERSON PORTEZ AU COMPTE DE L'ETAT DE VIRGINIE [1]

1786			
Janvier	16	U. S. Mandat de M. de Jefferson de ce jour	L 5000
février	2	U. S. Autre du même de ce jour	4000
	4	Autres de Mr. Barclay en faveur de M. Houdon	800
	20	Acceptation de M. de Jefferson. Traite de M. Houdon	2400
	27	U. S. Mandat de M. de Jefferson de ce jour	5000
March	4	Acceptation de M. de Jefferson. Traite de M. Houdon	3600
			21.800

Endorsed: Private Grand.

[1] Jefferson papers, Library of Congress.

MEMORANDUM OF JEFFERSON[1]

Houdon's	Diana in plaister is	25 guinées
	his Frilleuse	15 guinées
	his écorché in plaister	12 louis

MEMORANDUM OF HOUDON[2]

Une colonne pour mettre le Buste de Mr. Le Marquis de la Fayette, tronquée d'ordre Ionique de 4 pi. 7 po. de hauteur en Marbre d'Italie coutera..... 1000 ++
Houdon asks 1.000.000 livres to make the equestrian Statue of Gen[l] Washington, & to be 8 years about it.[3]
Endorsed: Column truncated. Wash[n]. Equestrian statue.

TITRES A L'APPUI DU COMPTE DE L'ÉTAT DE VIRGINIE[4]

No. 1[er]

L 10,000—July 17, 1785 Received of Mr Grand on account of the united States ten thousand livres this Day
Signé Th. Jefferson.

No. 2

L 2724—6—6— Traite de M. Houdon Sur Son Excellence Th. Jefferson à Paris datée de Southampton July 27 1785 à dix Jours de datte à L'ordre de Benjamin Francklin & en marge (accepted With M. Grand
signé Jefferson

No. 3

L 1800 Il vous plaira payer à M. Houdon la Somme de Mille huit Cent Livres, a compte d'un Second Buste

[1] Jefferson papers, Library of Congress.
[2] Jefferson papers, Library of Congress. Dated in pencil [September 1786].
[3] Jefferson's handwriting.
[4] Jefferson papers. Library of Congress.

du Marquis de la fayette, que J'ai Commandé par Ordre de l'Etat de Virginie, que vous passerés au Compte de l'Etat de Virginie entre vos mains Paris 14 Janv^{r} 1786 Signé Th. Barclay—

No. 4

L 2400 Traite de M. Houdon Sur S. E. M^{r} Th. Jefferson à Paris datée de Philadelphie du 24 Septembre 1785 à trente Jours de vue à l'ordre du Docteur francklin à l'ordre de E. A. & C. Dutilh & en marge (Mr Grand will be pleased to pay this bill and charge it to the State of Virginia Signé Th. Jefferson

No. 5

L 3600 Traite de M. Houdon Sur S. E. Mr Th. Jefferson à Paris dattée de Philadelphie le 24 8^{bre} 1785 à trente Jours de vue à l'ordre de M. B^{m} francklin (en marge Mr Grand will be pleased to pay this for Virginia Mars 4 1786.— Signé Jefferson

No. 6

L 52—18 Quittance de Delorme du 6 mai 1786 pour divers Emballages

No. 7

L 41250 on account of the State of Virginia be pleased to pay to M. Bettinger & St Victour the sum of forty one thousand two hundred and fifty livres & charge the same to the State of Virginia as paid for arms of the Manufacture of bulle for the said state,
Signé Th Jefferson Paris 1er July 1786

No. 8

L 15773— State of Virginia
Be pleased to pay to the Sieur de Presolle fifteen

Courtesy of the Pennsylvania Museum
Memorial Hall, Philadelphia

FULTON

AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

Thousand Seven hundred and seventy three livres for cartouch Boxes and accoutrements for the state of Virginia & charge the Same as paid for the said State by order of Sir Signé Th Jefferson.

No. 9

L 2043—12—4 Traite de John Bonsfield de Bordeaux du 15 Juillet 1786 à 2 Jours de Datte à L'ordre de la Durantie Sur S. E. M. Th. Jefferson à Paris & en marge (Paris Julie 27 1786 accepted and to be [paid by] M. Grand Banker at Paris on account of the State of Virginia for arm[s] Signé Th. Jefferson

No. 10

L 1504— Traite de Thomas Bonsfield de Bordeaux du 14 8^{bre} 1786 Sur Th. Jefferson à Paris Au. 19 c^{t} fixe à l'ordre de Monsieur Dumez et en marge (Mr. Grand will be pleased to pay the above and charge it to the State of Virginia Signé Th. Jefferson, written with the left hand.)

No. 11

L 29700 at ten Days sight be pleased to pay to Mr Bettinger &c twenty nine thousand seven hundred livres for arms furnished to the State of Virginia & charge the Same to the said State. It will oblige Sir your humble servant Signé Th. Jefferson Oct. 30 1786 & plus bas W^{m} Short S^{e}

No. 12

L 11098.10 at ten Days Sight be pleased to pay to M^{r} Depresolle Eleven thousand & ninety eight livres ten Sols for Cartridge Boxes & furnished to the state of Virginia & charge the same to the same State It will oblige Signé Th. Jefferson 30. 8^{bre} 1786.

No. 13

L 22550 at ten Days sight be pleased to pay to M. Bettinguer & St. Victour twenty two thousand five hundred & fifty livres for Eight hundred & twenty Muskets furnished to the State of Virginia and Charge the Same to the State of Virginia as paid by order of Sir, Signé Th. Jefferson Paris 12 fev^{r} 1787 endossé à la Caisse d'Escompte.

No. 14

L 500—Traite de Th. Barclay de Bordeaux au 23 Juin 1787 à vue sur Grand à Paris à L'ordre de John Bonsfield &c a Wm Wernon

No. 15

L 11050 Traite de T^{s} Barclay de Bordeaux le 7 Juin 1787 a Usance à l'ordre du Ducan sur Grand &c à Paris & à Debussy Caissier general des Poudres & Salpetres.

No. 16

L 2721—9.3 Be pleased to pay to M Houdon two thousand Seven hundred and twenty one Livres, nine sous three deniers and charge the same to the State of Virginia as paid in part of his Expences going and returning for the purpose of taking the figure of General Washington Signé Th. Jefferson—

No. 17

L 1018—3 Be pleased to pay to Mr. Houdon one thousand and Eighteen livres three sols out of the money in your hands belonging to the State of Virginia and charge the Same to the said State

Signé Th. Jefferson

No. 18

L 1000 Be pleased to pay to M. Houdon a thousand livres for the Pedestal of the Bust of the Marquis de la fayette and charge the Same to the State of Virginia
Signé Th. Jefferson 13 avril 1789 Paris

No. 19

L 8000— Be pleased to pay to M. Houdon Eight Thousand livres and charge the Same to the State of Virginia, as being the Second payement due to him by Contract for the Statue of General Washington.
Signé Th. Jefferson
3 July 1789—

No. 20

L 9000 J'ai recu de M. Grand & C^e^ la Somme de neuf mille livres à valoir sur les vingt Cinq Mille livres qui me sont allouées par les Etats de Virginie pour executer la Statue du G^al^ Wasinghton Suivant le Contrat passé entre S. E. M. Jefferson & moi le huit Juillet mil sept Cent quatre Vingt Cinq Paris le 14 Decembre 1792. Signé Houdon—
Nous certifions que les details cidessus Sont conformes aux Titres qui sont en nos mains
Paris 25 May 1793
Grand & C^e^

HOUDON TO THE GOVERNOR OF VIRGINIA[1]

His Excellency the Governor of the State of Virginia.
Sir,
the 8 July 1785 he was agreed betwen his Excellency Mr. Jefferson in the Virginia's state name and me that I should executed in marble the statute of Mr. Washington, for the

[1] Jefferson papers, Library of Congress.

price of 25,000 ++ french money, to be paid in three times—at the period of the last payement at the end of 1792, I received 9000 which would formed the whole sum I ought to received, if it had not been paid in *assignats* who losting in that time 60/100 give only the value of 5625 silver
to remain due 3375.

By a letter to his excellency Mr. Monroe, I imediately claim against this sort of payment, I inclose here the answer Mr. Grand make for him to me.—Mr. Morris and Mr. Short did't recieved answer from the Virginia's state to the several letters they wrote on this account. When at the end of 1795 his excellency Mr. Monroe ordered the statute's departure, I renew my claim, but neither the Minister or the consul won't take any determination on this object; them and me, wrote to the Virginia's state on this account, but again no answer. Now I adress myself directly to you, Sir, and hope you will find my request as right as any of the three ministers aboved mentioned and that I shall be honoured of a satisfactory answer.

I am with the respect due to your Caracter, Sir, of your excellency,

the most humble servant,

HOUDON

Sculpteur, au Louvre,
à Paris

Paris, 8 7^{bre} 1796.

GRAND TO HOUDON [1]

Copie de la lettre de Mr. Grand à Mr. Houdon sculpteur en datte du 28 9bre 1792.

Mr. Morris trouve juste la reclamation de Mr. Houdon, mais comme il ne peut disposer des fonds du Congrès sans

[1] Jefferson papers, Library of Congress.

son consentement il en fera la demande au Congrès, mais en attendant il conseille à Mr. Houdon de recevoir toujours le solde sur un reçu motivé, c'est aussi ce que pense Mr. Grand.

pour copie conforme
HOUDON.

Endorsed: Mr. Houdon. On the subject of General Washington's statue.

DU PONT DE NEMOURS TO THOMAS JEFFERSON [1]

New York, 20 février 1802.

Puisque le Président des Etats unis se trouve membre de l'Institut national de France, il faut qu'il contribue de son influence à rendre un service à un de ses confrères l'excellent Sculpteur Houdon.—Celui-ci a laissé en Amérique un très beau buste de Benjamin Franklin, lequel est actuellement chez moi. Ce buste en marbre vaut cent louis de notre monnaie, environ 400 dollars. Rien n'est plus convenable à la nation que de le placer dans votre Capitole, soit aux dépens des Etats unis, soit à ceux de la corporation de Washington city, soit à ceux d'une souscription de vingt-quatre personnes à vingt dollars chacune. Et Houdon, à qui la Virginie doit encore mille écus sur la statue de Washington, est dans un véritable besoin d'argent. Je recommande cela à votre bonté, à votre dignité, à votre sagesse.

Endorsed: Received. Feb. 27.

JAMES MONROE TO THOMAS JEFFERSON [2]

Richmond, March 14, 1802.

Dear Sir,—I found your favor of the 28th ulto. communicating an extract of a letter from Dupont de Nemours rela-

[1] Jefferson papers, Library of Congress.
[2] *The Writings of James Monroe,* edited by Stanislaus M. Hamilton, Vol. III, 338.

tive to the claim of the artist Houdon to be paid the sum which he lost by the depreciation of the assignats in the last instalment which he recd. for the statue of Genl. Washington. I postponed an answer untill I had taken the advice of council by which I am authorised to inform you that whatever sum you state to be due shall be paid on yr. certificate of the same. I send you a letter of yours to Govr. Brooke, one of Houdon to the Govr. of Virga. and a copy of one from the banker Grand to Houdon certified by the latter, which shew that the contract was in specie, that the assignats were accepted by him with the approbation of Mr. Morris on the principle and in the expectation that they shod. be sealed. I hope and presume that Mr. Morris will be able to establish the facts not known to you, necessary to adjust the account, to your satisfaction, so that we may be enabled to pay the artist what is justly his due. We do not think ourselves authorised to purchase the bust of Franklin, without the sanction of the legislature. We are persuaded its sanction might be had at the next session, tho' [we?] are not authorised to commence a treaty or make any stipulation relative to it.

The repeal of the judiciary law of the last session forms an interesting epoch in our affrs. We shall soon see whether the party which created it are disposed and able to convulse the country on pretext of the repeal. I shod. not be surprised to [see] the court of appls. advancing with a bold stride to effect the object. But I trust its efforts will be fruitless. Sincerely I am yr. friend & servant.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS TO THOMAS JEFFERSON[1]

Washington, 21 March, 1802.

Dear Sir

I receive this Instant your Favor of this Date Were I at Home, I might perhaps find some Memorandum respect-

[1] Jefferson papers, Library of Congress.

Courtesy of the Pennsylvania Museum
Memorial Hall, Philadelphia

CONDORCET

AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

ing the Transaction which it alludes to. Certainly I should find the Letters I have received, and Copies of those I may have written on the Subject. By the Copy Mr Houdon has transmitted, of a Note from Mr Grand, it is evident that *he* at least must have misunderstood me. Houdon frequently mentioned the matter to me. I as frequently told him it was a Business in which I had no Concern nor Authority. When he seemed to be surprized at this, considering the Agency you had in it, I told him that you had not, on that Occasion, acted as Minister of the United States, but merely in Consequence of an Application to you by the State of Virginia, and to oblige that State. That, of Course, I did not succeed to your Authority *in that Behalf*. That I had, however, no Doubt but the State would honorably perform the Engagements you had taken. That the Government of the United States had indeed directed me to cause effective Payment to be made to sundry Officers formerly in the American Service, without Regard to the nominal Sum in Assignats. That I had given Mr Grand Directions consonant to the Orders I had received, but that I had no Right to give Orders respecting the funds of the State of Virginia, nor to take Engagements for that State. I remember well that Grand wanted to cover himself under a Direction from me, which I refused to give. He was desirous of paying over the Money, and I believe that (after having refus'd officially to take any Step whatever in the Business) I told him that, as an Individual, it was my private Opinion Mr Houdon would do better to receive the Money, and reserve, in the Receipt he should give, a Right to apply at a future Day to the State for the Difference of Value.

You will observe that the Grands were in a delicate Situation. If they held the Money of Virginia, they might thereby make themselves eventually liable for the Depre-

ciation. If they tendered it to Houdon, he could not (but at the hazard of his Life) refuse to receive it. But he might have complain'd of hard Usage; and they thought it not consistent that, while the United States were paying in solid Coin, the State of Virginia should offer depreciated Paper. This Situation naturally induced them to state what I had said to them as strongly as it would bear.

I presume that Mr Houdon has now carried his Demand, for Loss of Value, full as high as the facts will permit. I should, therefore, suppose it advisable to scrutinize the Dates, and examine the grounds on which the Value is taken at the *proper Date*. If Value was lost while he deliberated about the Propriety of receiving the Money which lay in Readiness for him, the State may, in Strictness, insist that he shall bear that Loss. They may perhaps think it more consistent with their Dignity not to descend into these Minutiae, and that may for aught I know be the more correct Procedure.

I have the Honor to be with perfect Respect Dear Sir
your obedient Servant
GOUV. MORRIS

Addressed: His Excellency
Thomas Jefferson Esq^r^ President of the United States.

THOMAS JEFFERSON TO JAMES MONROE[1]

Washington, March 31, 1802.

.....I have received a statement of Gouverneur Morris on the case of Houdon. It gives us little insight into it. I have papers at Monticello which I think will throw some light on the subject. I suspend answering your letter, therefore, respecting this until I shall have visited Monticello.

[1] *Memorial edition,* XIX, 127.

JAMES MONROE TO THOMAS JEFFERSON [1]

Richmond, April 12, 1802.

Dear Sir,—I find among the papers in the council chamber an acct. adjusted by you between Houdon and the Commonwealth. Perhaps you have a copy of it at Monticello, which may be the document to which you wish to recur before you decide on his claim. If this paper is material it shall be sent to you, tho' to me it appears as if it cod. not be, as the sole or principal question is, what the depreciation was on the last payment made . . .

JAMES MONROE TO THOMAS JEFFERSON [2]

Richmond, April 25, 1802.

Dear Sir,—I returned on Friday from Albemarle without having accomplished the object of my trip by the sale of my land above Charlottesville. In my absence an alarm took place at Norfolk relative to the negroes, which was felt here, but which seems to have little foundation for it. Such is the state of things that it is hazardous for me, in regard to the publick opinion, to be absent from this place at any time. I shall send you the document referr'd to in my last respecting the acct. of Houdon, which may perhaps supercede a reference to that you have in Albemarle. You will be so kind as return this, it being the original filed in the council chamber . . .

DU PONT DE NEMOURS TO THOMAS JEFFERSON [3]

New York, 12 May 1802.

. . . Je vois que Houdon sera moins malheureux. Je vous en remercie. Ne l'oubliez pas. C'est à mon fils Victor au-

[1] *The Writings of James Monroe,* Vol. III, 340.
[2] *Idem,* Vol. III, 341.
[3] Jefferson papers, Library of Congress.

quel je laisse à New York les pouvoirs que M. Houdon m'avoit donnés, qu'il faudra remettre l'argent qui lui est et lui sera dû . . .

Endorsed: Received May 23.

REPORT OF SKIPWITH[1]

The undersigned Commercial Agent of the United States at Paris, having by desire of James Monroe, Envoy Extraordinary, etc., to the French Republic, examined the several papers exhibited by Mr Houdon in support of his claim against the State of Virginia, for the loss by depreciation on the sum of 9000 Livres paid him in Assignats by the late bankers of the U. S., Messrs. Grand & C°., on the 29th of November, 1792, on account of the statue of General Washington made by him for the State of Virginia, does hereby certify that by the scale of depreciation established by law in this country it appears that, on the aforesaid 29th of November, 1792, the sum of 9000 Livres in assignats was worth 62000 Livres specie and therefore that the said Houdon did sustain a loss of 2800 Livres. In witness whereof I have signed the 10th of June 1803, at Paris.

FULMER SKIPWITH

HOUDON'S RECEIPT[2]

J'ai reçu de son excellence Monsieur Monroe pour le compte de l'état de Virginie la somme de deux mille huit cent Livres pour solde ce qui me restait dû sur la statue pedestre du général Washington que j'ai executée et livrée au dit état. Paris ce 27 prairial an 11; 16 juin 1803.

HOUDON.

[1] Hart and Biddle, p. 217.
[2] *Ibid.*

JAMES MONROE TO THE GOVERNOR OF VIRGINIA [1]

[John Page]

August 12, 1803.

I hope that my friends in Virginia have given me the proof which I have so often experienced from them of indulgence for failing to write them as I wished to have done since I left Richmond. The truth is, I have been engaged in a course of laborious duty, not in the best of health at times, and further restrained by the fear that my communications might be interrupted on the way. At present I have only to remind you and my other friends that I have not, and shall not, forget them, and also to transmit you a receipt from the artist Houdon, at Paris, for the amount of his claim of a balance due him on account of the Statue of the late Genl. Washington which I have paid him. You will recollect, or rather several of our estimable friends in the Council will, that it was decided that the artist should not lose by the depreciation of the paper in which the payment was made him; that the payment of the balance claimed was only delayed to have been correctly ascertained by Mr. Jefferson.

On my arrival in Paris, this poor man applied to me for justice, and I thought it best to pay him. It did not suit the character of the State or the transaction, that a just claim should be delayed on the account of that Statue. I had the account examined and settled by Mr. Skipwith, who has, I am persuaded, done ample justice to the parties. If what I have done is approved of, I have to request that you will be pleased to pay the amount to my friend, Mr. Tyler, of the Council, who will apply it as I shall desire in a letter I shall write to him in a day or two by N. York. I beg you to present my most friendly regards to the gentlemen of the Council, as also to Major Coleman and Mr. Hylton.

[1] *The Writings of James Monroe,* Vol. IV, 59-61.

THOMAS JEFFERSON TO NATHANIEL MACON[1]

Monticello, January 22, 1816.

. . . . Price, time, size, and style? It will probably take a couple of years to be ready. I am not able to be exact as to the price. We gave Houdon, at Paris, one thousand guineas for the one he made for this State; but he solemnly and feelingly protested against the inadequacy of the price, and evidently undertook it on motives of reputation alone. He was the first artist in France, and being willing to come over to take the model of the General, which we could not have got Canova to have done, that circumstance decided on the employment. We paid him additionally for coming over about five hundred guineas; and when the statue was done, we paid the expenses of one of his under workmen to come over and set it up, which might, perhaps, be one hundred guineas more. I suppose, therefore it cost us, in the whole, eight thousand dollars. But this was only of the size of life. Yours should be something larger. The difference it makes in the impression can scarcely be conceived. As to the style or costume, I am sure the artist, and every person of taste in Europe, would be for the Roman, the effect of which is undoubtedly of a different order. Our boots and regimentals have a very puny effect. . . .

WILLIAM SHORT TO THOMAS JEFFERSON[2]

Philada., Oct. 21, 1819.

Apropos of philosophers; you recollect without doubt the marble bust of Condorcet, which stood on a marble table in the salon of the Hotel de la Rochefoucauld. When it was determined no longer to recieve him in that house, it was thought *inconvenant* to keep the bust there. The grandchildren, who never liked him, availed themselves of this to

[1] *Memorial edition,* XIV, 410.

[2] Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society. Seventh Series. Vol. I, 288, 289.

Courtesy of the Pennsylvania Museum
Memorial Hall, Philadelphia

JOHN PAUL JONES

NATIONAL ACADEMY OF DESIGN

have the bust transported to the *garde meuble* without consulting the old lady, whose leave was generally asked on every occasion. She passed this over in silence, however, & never made a remark or enquiry as to the disappearance of the bust. It had cost her a great effort to signify to the original that his presence had become disagreeable; she had really a parental affection for him, & had given a remarkable proof of this at the time of his marriage. On her death I asked this bust of the granddaughter, who gave it to me with great pleasure. It has been on its way here ever since I left France, & has passed through as many *casus & discrimina rerum* as Eneas himself (or perhaps it was Ulysses) on its way. It has finally arrived & is at present placed in the Philosophical hall in the most suitable company, the busts of Franklin, yourself, Turgot.

THOMAS JEFFERSON TO JOHN H. SHERBURNE [1]

Monticello July 2.25

Sir

Your favor of June 29 was recieved yesterday. the facsimile of the hand writing of J. P. Jones is good, but as to the engraving of his figure, I must in truth and candor say it does not recall one single feature of his face to my perfect recollection of him. Houdon's bust of him is an excellent likeness. why have they not taken a side face of him from that? such an one would be perfect, and there must be several of those busts in the hands of his friends and others. if there be none nearer, I have one, and it would be but two days journey from Washington here for the artist to come and copy it. he might find other things here too worth copying. Accept my friendly salute

TH: J

(*Draft endorsed:* Sherburne John H.)

[1] Jefferson papers, Library of Congress.

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